DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 224 116 EA 015 202

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TITLE	Building Bridges: School Board Members' Political Roles. A Manual for Workshop Leaders. Keys to School Boardsmanship. A Program of Continuing Education for School Board Members.
INSTITUTION	Montana School Boards Association, Helena.; National School Boards Association, Washington, D.C.; Northwest Regional Educational Lab., Portland, Oreg.; Washington State School Directors Association, Olympia.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	82
CONTRACT	400-80-0105
NOTE	173p.; For related documents, see EA 015 201-212. Also contributing to the development of this document were the Idaho School Boards Association, the Oregon School Boards Association, and the Association of Alaska School Boards.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publications, National School Boards Association, 1055 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20007.
PUB TYPE	Guides - General (050) -- Audiovisual Materials (100)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Role; *Agency Cooperation; *Board of Education Role; Boards of Education; Educational Cooperation; Elementary Secondary Education; Leaders Guides; *Management Development; Program Administration; Program Development; Program Evaluation; Program Implementation; School Districts; *State School District Relationship; Superintendents; *Workshops
IDENTIFIERS	*Board of Education Members; *Politics of Education

ABSTRACT

The materials in this manual are designed to help workshop leaders prepare for and present a workshop for school board members on the political roles played by the board and its individual members. Three possible workshop focuses are treated, covering political roles at the local level, at the state level, and, in cases of cooperation, between school districts. These workshops are intended to provide school board members and superintendents an opportunity to identify, analyze, discuss, and develop responses to the changing politics of education. The manual consists of six sections: an introduction; three sections on planning, presenting, and evaluating the workshops; a selection of resource materials; and a section containing a booklet for workshop participants on each of the three workshop topic areas. The discussion of planning covers the scope and focus of the workshop, resource and background materials, and the procedures, physical arrangements, and participant groupings suitable. The presentation section includes sequential descriptions of activities in each of the three workshops, as well as of introductory activities. The resource materials provided include papers on both educational politics and interdistrict cooperation, and masters from which transparencies for projection at the workshops can be reproduced. (Author/PGD)

ED224116

BUILDING BRIDGES

Keys to School Boardsmanship

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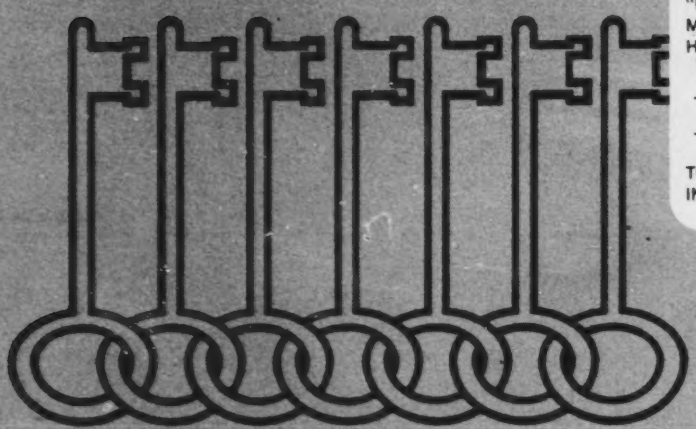

A Program of Continuing Education for School Board Members

EA 015 202

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These materials have been produced as part of "Keys to School Boardsmanship," a project to develop new materials in boardsmanship education for local school board members. It is a joint effort among:

- The Association of Alaska School Boards
- The Idaho School Boards Association
- The Montana School Boards Association
- The Oregon School Boards Association
- The Washington State School Directors' Association
- The National School Boards Association
- The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

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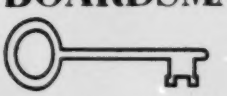
KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP



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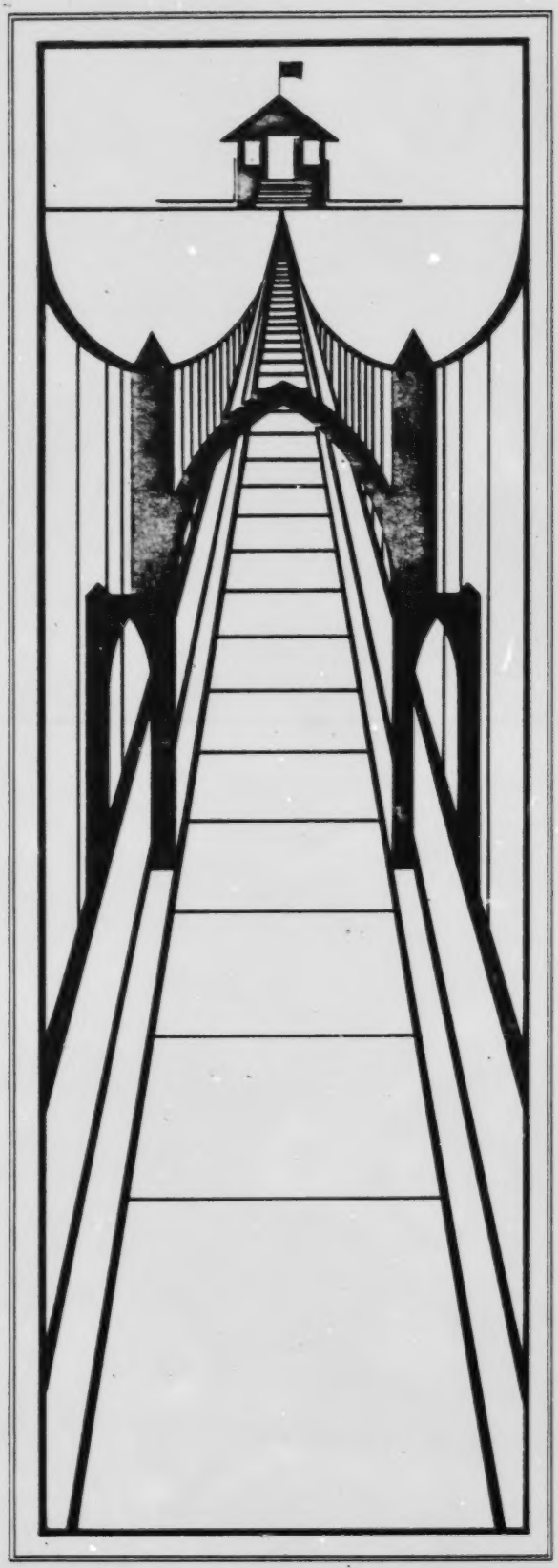

BUILDING BRIDGES:

School Board Members' Political Roles

A Manual for Workshop Leaders

Developed by

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KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP

Prologue:

This manual is one in a series of thirteen developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) as part of the "Keys to School Boardsmanship" project.

The workshop programs resulting from the project are intended to help strengthen local school boards through continuing education.

The workshops in the series have been thoroughly tested by NWREL staff and by the staff of state school board associations in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington. These programs have been found to be extremely useful as tools for strengthening continuing education services to school board members.

The "Keys to School Boardsmanship" materials are now being published and distributed by the National School Boards Association (NSBA). In addition, the NSBA is developing a national center designed to assist state associations to make the best use of the material.

Thirteen manuals in the series now available from NSBA include:

- Board/Administrator Relations
- Building Bridges: School Board Political Roles
- Communicating with the Community
- Conflict: Alternatives to Blowing a Fuse
- Effective School Board Meetings
- The Educational Management Team
- Policy Development
- Policy is Powe:
- Program Evaluation: School Board Roles
- What Do School Boards Do?
- School Board Self-Assessment
- School Improvement: A Tune the School Board Can Play
- Teamwork: The Board and Superintendent in Action

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The materials in this manual are designed to help workshop leaders prepare for and present the Building Bridges workshop to members of local school boards.

Purpose and Rationale

The three workshops in this series have been developed in response to requests from local school board members and their state leaders.

It is their perception that boardsmanship, as well as public education more generally, has become more "political" (in a non-partisan sense). And, it is their desire to increase the awareness of local school board members about political issues, trends, responsibilities and strategies. In their view, board members should develop a perception of themselves as politicians in order to participate effectively in shaping these forces.

Some of the trends which have given rise to this concern are discussed in depth in other parts of this manual. In brief, they are:

- The continuing need for board members to remain representative and responsive to their local school communities in an increasing complexity of educational governance
- The growing intergovernmental context of educational decision making, resulting from changing roles of municipal, state and federal government
- The reassertion, in recent years, of state responsibility and authority for public schools, and the growing importance of the legislative and regulatory processes in public school policy

Through the three workshops included in this manual, school board members and superintendents have an opportunity to identify, analyze, discuss and develop responses to the changing politics of education.

Uses

The Building Bridges workshop has many potential uses, from the point of view of a state association of local school boards. It might be used, for example:

- To develop awareness of the general membership about political roles and issues, through presentations at regional or statewide meetings
- To help in developing issues, plans and strategies of the association legislative committee
- To provide orientation to legislative liaison members of local boards

Goals and Objectives

The goal of Building Bridges is to afford workshop participants an opportunity to examine the political dimensions and responsibilities of their roles as elected school officials at the local and state levels.

Objectives for each workshop include the following:

Workshop 1 The Local Level

Workshop participants will:

- Understand community expectations for school board representation
- Understand two distinct philosophies and approaches to the task of representation
- Assess their own approach to representation, and analyze its advantages and disadvantages
- Understand how school boards can be responsive to their community constituencies

Workshop 2: The State Level

Workshop participants will:

- Understand trends in the role relationships of federal, state, and local government for the public schools
- Understand some of the attitudes of state legislators regarding public education and educators
- Understand some of the features of the organization of state legislatures and characteristics of state education legislative leaders
- Develop preliminary strategies for the involvement of school board members in the legislative process
- Identify information and resource needs for legislative involvement

Workshop 3: Coalitions for the Public Schools

Workshop participants will:

- Understand the need for and approaches to building coalitions
- Examine advantages and disadvantages of coalition membership
- Identify issues and strategies for coalition building activity

Organization of the Leader's Guide

In addition to the introductory section, this Leader's Guide contains material to assist you in planning your presentation of the Building Bridges workshops. The other sections and their purposes and contents are as follows:

Section 2: Planning the workshops

This section contains information about preparations the leader needs to make before presenting the workshop. Included are hints and suggestions about:

- Background reading
- Physical arrangements to make
- Groupings of participants
- Materials preparation
- Equipment needed

Section 3: Presenting the workshops

This section includes a step by step description of workshop procedures, along with time allocations and required resources. Here, you will find:

- A sequence of workshop activities
- Specific instructions and references to participant materials and audio and visual aids
- A leader focus for each workshop activity
- Helpful hints about workshop activities

Section 4: Evaluating the workshops

In this section, you will find information about various approaches to evaluation of the workshop. Included are:

- A rationale for getting feedback about the workshop
- A sample workshop evaluation form
- A discussion of alternatives

Section 5: Resources

This section contains reading material which the leader will need to be familiar with before presenting the workshops. Included in this section are:

- Concept papers
- "Theory" papers
- Further explanation of ideas developed in the workshop

Section 6: Participant Materials

This section contains a participant booklet for each of the three workshops.

SECTION 2: PLANNING THE WORKSHOP

As you plan a Building Bridges workshop, you will need to consider several issues and make many choices. The issues discussed here are:

- Determining the scope and focus of the workshop
- Becoming thoroughly familiar with background materials, workshop procedures and resource materials
- Physical arrangements for the workshop
- Grouping of participants
- Preparation of handout materials
- Equipment needs

In this section, you will find suggestions intended to help you consider and make decisions about these issues, and to develop your workshop plan.

Focus and Scope of the Workshops

Building Bridges is composed of three workshops. The focus of the first is upon school board political involvement at the local level. The focus of the second unit is upon state level political involvement. The third unit focuses upon building coalitions to promote public education.

Time requirement for Workshop 1 is 3 hours, 15 minutes.

Time requirement for Workshop 2 is 5 hours, 20 minutes.

Time requirement for Workshop 3 is 2 hours, 35 minutes.

The time you have available and the focus you want for participants should help you determine which workshop to choose.

It is important to recognize that the workshop materials are flexible, that they can be used in ways different from those described here. It is equally important to recognize that the workshop is designed to achieve specific objectives, as outlined in Section 1. In determing the focus and scope of the workshop, review the objectives for the unit(s) you have decided to present. Which objectives will you emphasize? Have you added new objectives? Are you prepared to state and explain the workshop objectives?

Sample Agendas for Building Bridges Workshops

The following are typical sample agendas for each of the workshops in this series. Reviewing them should help you determine the emphasis and modifications you may wish to make to suit your needs.

Workshop 1: The Local Level

Time	Activity, Number and Name
5 min.	1: Stating Goals and Objectives
20 min.	2: Focusing Activity: Your Election
20 min.	3: School Board Representation
35 min.	4: Assessing Your Style of Representation
35 min.	5: School Board Responsiveness
70 min.	6: School Board Influence
10 min.	7: Wrap up and Evaluation

3 hrs. 15 min.

Workshop 2: The State Arena

10 min.	1: Focusing Activity: Local Control
15 min.	2: Local Control and Intergovernmental Relations
35 min.	3: Public Perceptions of Local Control
60 min.	4: Examining the Role of the State Education Agency
15 min.	5: Understanding State Education Legislative Leaders
45 min.	6: Legislators Evaluate Interest Group Activity
50 min.	7: Some Issues in Education Governance
25 min.	8: Resources for Political Involvement
30 min.	9: Communicating with Legislators
25 min.	10: Planning for Legislative Involvement
10 min.	11: Wrap up and Evaluation

5 hrs. 20 min.

Workshop 3: Coalitions for Public Schools

25 min.	1: Focusing on Coalitions
10 min.	2: Workshop Objectives and Agenda
60 min.	3: Why Build Coalitions?
45 min.	4: Identifying Coalition Potentials
15 min.	5: Wrap up and Evaluation

2 hrs. 35 min.

Becoming Familiar with the Materials

Reviewing Background Papers: As part of your planning for a workshop, set aside some time to read the background materials in Section 5. There, you will find the following papers:

- "Building Bridges: The Political Roles of School Board Members," a concept paper
- "Toward New Coalitions for Public Education"
- The Politics of Boardsmanship: A Panel Discussi
- How Can Associations be Effective in a Pluralistic Society

These papers serve to give you background in the workshop topics. They contain information you will need to present the workshops and to respond to questions about the topics.

The papers summarize relevant research, explain in greater detail the concepts and ideas involved in the workshop, and develop a perspective or framework for the topic.

Reviewing Workshop Procedures

This step in preparing for a workshop will lead you directly to Section 3 for a detailed review of workshop procedures.

In Section 3, you will find the procedures for Workshop 1 (pages 12-20), for Workshop 2 (pages 21-37), and for Workshop 3 (pages 38-44).

As you review the workshop procedures, you may wish to underline various points you will want to emphasize.

Also, you will find it helpful to identify the related resource material for each activity, and to become familiar with the participant materials related to each activity.

You will note that each workshop activity is introduced by name, and is followed by a Leader Focus, a statement of the purpose or objective of the activity. In the left hand column are estimated time requirements for each activity, and for parts of the activity. In the right hand column, resources and references related to the activty or procedure are identified. The bulleted items (o) are the specific steps the leader takes in presenting the workshop. These include instructions to participants, lecturettes, and other procedures. At the end of some activities, Helpful Hints are provided in order to share some of the experiences which the developers have had at that point in the workshop.

The following example illustrates the organization of information in Section 3.

EXAMPLE

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time: 20 min.	Activity 3: School Board Representation	
	Leader Focus: This activity will help participants develop an understanding of representation as a basic political responsibility of school board members and of alternative ways of carrying it out.	
	o Procedures (Directions to participants, Lecturettes, etc.)	Transparency References & Participant Material References
	o	
	o	

> Helpful Hint: Keep the activity moving rapidly. Don't allow participants to slow it down by too much discussion.

You will note that each activity is "framed" between solid lines, to help identify when activities end and begin.

Reviewing the Participant Booklet

Participant booklets for each of the workshops are found in Section 6 of the manual.

You will want to become thoroughly familiar with the participant booklets for the Building Bridges workshop you plan to present. In particular, you should get clearly in mind the participant worksheets and Idea Papers as they are referred to in Section 3 of the manual.

The booklets (a separate one for each workshop) are designed to provide participants with instructions and worksheets for activities, and with summaries of information provided in the workshop. The Idea Papers should not be read during the workshop. Rather, they are "take home" materials. Participants should not need to take extensive notes during these workshops. This distracts from their attention.

Each page in the participant booklet is keyed to an activity or procedure described in Section 3, "Materials" column.

Finally, each booklet contains a tear-out workshop evaluation form as the final page. You will find more information about this in Section 4.

Physical Arrangements for the Workshop

You should give some thought to this issue as you plan your workshop.

Don't neglect to identify the most strategic position for yourself in the room. You should be the focus of attention, easily visible by all participants, and within comfortable voice range for all. You should be within easy reach of the overhead projector.

Since the workshop requires a high level of individual, small group, and large group participation, it works best when participants are seated in groups of five to seven around round tables.

This arrangement gives the workshop leader and the participants the greatest amount of flexibility in moving from one kind of activity to another.

This arrangement also allows you to circulate among tables and participants, answer individual questions, and keep the groups on task.

You will also need to plan for ease of viewing the overhead transparencies used throughout the workshop. Whether you use a screen or a blank wall for showing the transparencies, all participants should be able to see them easily from their vantage point in the room without shifting their positions greatly.

Grouping the Participants

Give some thought to this issue. Typically, two kinds of groupings of participants are possible in a workshop.

- Stranger groups, made up of individuals who do not know one another well. For example, school board members from different school districts probably do not know one another well.

- Home groups, made up of people who are quite familiar with one another, because they work together, or socialize often. School board members from the same district are an example.

Stranger groups are created simply by directing participants to sit with people from other districts as they enter the room. There are advantages to establishing such groupings, including:

- A sharing of a variety of experiences, ideas, and perspectives

- Development of a broader perspective about problems, issues and solutions

- An avoidance of tensions, problems, and differences which may be present in a home group

In establishing stranger groups, care should be taken to allow individuals to get acquainted with one another early in the workshop. You might ask people at each table to introduce themselves, and give some information about their district, their schools, or other matter.

Another alternative is to establish home groups for the workshop. Home groups have several advantages, too:

- o They may make direct use of the workshop to develop plans or ideas they want to put to use.
- o Since they are already familiar with one another, they need no time to get acquainted.
- o They have established patterns of discussion and interaction.

Your use of home or stranger groups will depend on your overall objectives, and upon what you know about the workshop participants.

In either case, you should plan to monitor the group progress regularly during the workshop to ensure full participation and task related behavior. If, by chance, the seating does not lend itself to small group arrangements, ask participants to interact with one or two neighbors when the activity calls for discussion or sharing.

Task Orientation and Participant Accountability

The use of humor throughout a workshop helps lighten the mood and provides for needed relief from hard work. Use it, but use it judiciously.

Participants like a businesslike attitude from the workshop leader. Moreover, you will have to maintain a task focus for the workshops in order to complete them, since they are tightly sequenced. Participants sometimes will want to pursue a line of discussion or questioning, or to continue small group discussions beyond the time allowed. You must control the time carefully and tactfully, bringing the workshop back in focus. You can help ensure small group accountability by asking each to select a discussion leader and reporter for group tasks.

Preparation of Workshop Materials

As part of your planning for a workshop, you will need to be certain that you have enough booklets for all participants.

In addition, it is helpful to organize your own materials (notes, transparencies, workshop procedures) in the sequence you plan to follow.

Equipment

These workshops require the use of an overhead projector and screen (or blank wall) for projection. Check the projector in advance to ensure that it is in good operating order. It is a good idea to have a spare projector bulb close at hand in case of malfunction. On occasion, you may need to use a microphone. A portable, clip-on type is suggested, since this allows you to move about.

Transparencies for The Building Bridges Workshop

In preparing for workshop presentations, review and put in order the appropriate transparencies. Listed by workshop unit, these are:

	Number	Title
Workshop 1	BB 1	Public Expectations
	BB 2	Political Issues in Campaigns
	BB 3	Politics, A Definition
	BB 4	Politics, Gallup Poll Information
	BB 5	Two-Way Representation
	BB 6	Public Evaluation of School Board Representation
	BB 7	Political Syles in Representation
	BB 8	Styles of Representation Graph
	BB 9	Delegate or Trustee
	BB 10	Is Our Board Responsive
	BB 11	Who Influences Our Board
	BB 12	Views and Opinions Which Have Influence
	BB 13	Influence, Gallup Poll Information
Workshop 2	BB 14	Who Should Decide What is Taught, Gallup Poll Information
	BB 4	Politics, A Definition
	BB 15	State and Federal Regulations
	BB 16	Local Responsibility for Education, Gallup Poll Information
	BB 17	Public Confidence in American Institutions, Gallup Poll Information
	BB 18	Role and Authority of the State Education Agency
	BB 19	Characteristics of State Legislative Leadership
	BB 20	Information Sources for Legislative Leaders
	BB 21	Relationships with Legislative Education Leaders, State Level
	BB 22	Relationships with Legislative Education Leaders, Local Level
	BB 23	Policy Making Responsibility
	BB 24	Local Control of Schools
	BB 25	Need for School Changes
	BB 26	Educator Accountability
	BB 27	Legislators' Perceptions of Interest Group Effectiveness
	BB 28	Resources for Legislative Impact
	BB 29	Communicating with Legislators
Workshop 3	BB 30	Coalitions
	BB 31	Political Climate for Education

SECTION 3: PRESENTING THE WORKSHOP

WORKSHOP 1

STRENGTHENING RELATIONS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

To the Leader: This unit of Building Bridges focuses upon the political roles of school board members in the local school district and community. Included in this unit are information and activities designed to help workshop participants explore and examine the political dimensions of their roles.

Included in this unit are the following:

- o A focusing activity designed to bring participants' attention to the topic
- o A list of community expectations for school board members
- o An assessment activity designed to determine individuals' styles of representation
- o An explanation of two styles of representation
- o Gallup Poll information regarding community evaluation of school board representation
- o A list of action ideas for increasing school board representation and responsiveness, or for building bridges at the local level

The workshop plan or design is outlined below, along with estimated times and resources needed for each activity. Study it carefully before attempting to present the workshop. You will find additional background reading in Section 5 of this manual. Also review the participant materials for the workshop, found in Section 6 of the manual.

WORKSHOP PROCEDURES

Total Workshop
Time: 3 Hours, 15 min.

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time: 5 min.	**Activity 1: Stating Goals and Objectives** Leader Focus: Participants should be made aware of the goals and objectives of the workshop as part of the preliminary activities. o State and post the overall workshop goals and the objectives for this section. -- The overall goal of the Building Bridges workshop is to increase participants' understanding of and skills in the political dimensions of boardsmanship.	Newsprint, Goals and Objectives

TIME		MATERIALS
	o This section of the workshop focuses on the local level. Objectives include: -- To clarify community expectations for school board representation -- To develop an understanding of one's own style of representation -- To understand alternative styles of representation -- To understand school board responsiveness, and ways a board can be responsive -- To apply workshop concepts in solving several typical school board problems	
Total Time: 20 min.	Activity 2: Focusing Activity: Your Election Leader Focus: This activity serves to draw participants' attention to the topic by engaging them in a discussion of why they were elected.	
2 min.	o Ask participants to answer two questions on Worksheet 1. -- Why did you stand for election? -- Why did the voters elect you?	Worksheet 1 Elections
2 min.	o Ask participants on a volunteer basis to give their answers to the questions.	
5 min.	o Using the transparency, summarize the points about expectations of the public for school board members. Make the following points: -- Promote public interest -- Uphold community values -- Listen to grievances -- Supervise professionals -- Conserve resources -- Promote rights and interests -- Improve educational programs	Trans BB 1 Public's Expectations

TIME			MATERIALS
5 min.	o	Using the transparency, summarize the following points about important issues as school board members stand for election: -- School taxes -- Rising costs -- Instructional program -- Superintendent's performance -- Student discipline	Trans. BB 2 Political Issues in Board Member Campaigns
3 min.	o	Point out that many decisions school boards must make are political decisions, or are made in a political environment. Share the definition of politics. "Politics is the competition surrounding the definition and control of policy." "Politics determines who gets what, when, and how."	Trans. BB 3 Politics, Definition
2 min.	o	Acknowledge that many school board members find it difficult to view themselves as politicians. Using the transparency, illustrate that the public recognizes the political involvement of school boards.	Trans. BB 4 Politics
1 min.	o	Suggest that as locally elected policy makers, board members are their districts' key politicians and statesmen.	
	o	Point out that in the following parts of the workshop, board members' political roles and responsibilities will be reviewed and analyzed.	

Total Time: 20 min.

Activity 3: School Board Representation

Leader Focus: This activity will help participants develop an understanding of representation as a basic political responsibility of school board members and of alternative ways of carrying it out.

3 min.	o	Point out that in the prior (Focusing) activity, it was clear that community members have expectations for representation by the school board.	
2 min.	o	Explain that in this activity, the basic school board political responsibility of representation will be examined in more detail.	

TIME			MATERIALS
5 min.	o	Using the transparency, explain that school boards occupy a unique position in the school system, linking the community and the professional staff. School boards therefore have a dual or two-way responsibility for representation. -- Representing the community to the professional educators -- Representing the schools to the community	Trans. BB 5 Two-Way Representation
5 min.	o	Using the transparency, show how the representation by school boards was evaluated by a cross section of adults in 1974.	Trans. BB 6 Gallup Poll Data on School Board Representation
5 min.	o	Using the transparency, introduce the range of styles of representation, from "trustee" to "delegate."	Trans. BB 7 Political Styles

Total Time: 35 min.

Activity 4: Assessing Your Style of Representation

Leader Focus: As a result of this activity, participants will understand their own predominant style of representation, its advantages and disadvantages, and will be able to compare their styles to those of board members nationally.

2 min.	o	Introduce the "Styles of Representation Assessment" activity as a way participants can better understand their own approach.	
10 min.	o	Refer to the assessment activity in the participant booklet. Ask participants to complete the questionnaire, Worksheet 2. Give the following instructions: -- For each pair of statements, choose either A or B, depending upon which you think best describes your attitude or behavior.	Worksheet 2
		-- On the scoring sheet, Worksheet 3, record the responses from the questionnaire.	Worksheet 3
		-- Add the number of circled items in each column and record the number.	

TIME			MATERIALS
3 min.	o	Ask participants to complete the graph on Worksheet 3, using their scores from the questionnaire.	Worksheet 3 Graph
5 min.	o	Using the transparency, show some of the variations in graphs and the interpretations of them. For example: -- A graph with a 45 degree line represents "balanced representation." -- Graphs may be skewed toward the "delegate" or "trustee" axis, indicating preferences for those styles. -- Graphs which are "flat" against either axis may mean that the individual needs to have a look at representation.	Trans. BB 8 Styles of Representation
5 min.	o	Refer the participants to the interpretive information in their booklet, Idea Paper 2. Make the following points: -- Neither style is "better" than the other. -- An ability to choose the approach depending on the circumstances is a healthy capacity. -- "Balanced representation" is the best approach because it recognizes differences in situations.	Participant Idea Paper 2
5 min.	o	Using the transparency, show participants that most school board members strongly prefer the trustee style of representation.	Trans. BB 9 Delegate or Trustee?
5 min.	o	Summarize this activity by quickly reviewing the major ideas of this section. Use the transparencies to review: -- Representation as a basic political responsibility -- Two-way representation -- Gallup Poll data on school board representation	 Trans. BB 5 Trans. BB 6

TIME		MATERIALS
	-- Political styles	Trans. BB 7
	-- Delegate or Trustee	Trans. BB 9
	-- Styles of representation	Trans. BB 8

Total Time: 35 min.

Activity 5: School Board Responsiveness

Leader Focus: Through this activity, participants will understand ways in which school boards can be responsive to their constituencies. They will also review evaluation information regarding school board responsiveness.

2 min.	o	Introduce the idea of responsiveness as a second basic political responsibility.	
3 min.	o	Ask participants to complete the sentence, "A school board is responsive to its community if. . .," from Worksheet 4 in their booklets.	Worksheet 4
5 min.	o	Ask participants to discuss their answers in their work groups.	
5 min.	o	Ask three or four volunteers to share their answers in the total group.	
	o	Quickly summarize points made by volunteers.	
10 min.	o	Using the transparency, review the kinds of board responsiveness and the evaluation information about them.	Trans. BB 10 Is Our Board Responsive?
		-- Policy responsiveness -- Service responsiveness -- Public goals responsiveness -- Symbolic responsiveness -- Receptivity to influence	
2 min.	o	Relate these ideas to those suggested by participants in the earlier part of this activity.	
	o	Point out Idea Paper 3, "A Summary of the Ideas on Responsiveness."	Idea Paper 3 Responsiveness

TIME			MATERIALS
5 min.	o	Ask participants to suggest examples of each kind of responsiveness.	
3 min.	o	Summarize the major points in the activity. Underscore the idea that responsiveness is a basic school board political responsibility.	

Total Time: 70 min.

Activity 6: School Board Influence

2 min.	o	Introduce the activity by pointing out that being receptive to influence is another school board political responsibility.	
10 min.	o	Ask participants to respond to the question on influence, Worksheet 5 in their booklets.	Worksheet 5 Who Influences Our Board?
5 min.	o	Using the transparency, tally the responses to the question by asking participants to raise their hands if they marked: -- Teachers -- Parents -- Administrators -- Local government -- State government -- Local political parties -- Politically powerful groups -- Students -- Others	Trans. BB 11 Who Influences Our Board?
5 min.	o	Using the transparency, compare the national Gallup Poll responses to those of the participants.	Trans. BB 12 Views and Opinions
5 min.	o	Note and discuss any discrepancies between participant responses and poll data.	
5 min.	o	Focus attention on the most dramatic of the discrepancies. Ask participants to give their own explanations of these discrepancies.	
8 min.	o	Ask participants to again look at Worksheet 5. This time they should circle the groups which they think <u>should have more</u> influence upon the school board.	Worksheet 5

TIME			MATERIALS
10 min.	o	Direct work groups to identify a discussion leader and proceed to share and discuss their results.	
5 min.	o	Ask discussion leaders to give group reports.	
5 min.	o	Using the transparency, show Gallup Poll data on influence. Make the following points:	Trans. BB 13 Influence
		-- Even though nearly half (46%) of the adults respond that no group had more influence than it should have, a sizable number of people (34%) had no opinion.	
		-- Of those who answered yes (20%), some identified the school board as having too much influence!	
3 min.	o	Ask for comments or discussion of this data.	
5 min.	o	Summarize the activity by reviewing the major ideas discussed. Use the transparencies to review:	
		-- Politics as competition to control policy	Trans. BB 3
		-- Who influences our board	Trans. BB 11
		-- Views and opinions which have influence	Trans. BB 12
		-- "Influence," Gallup Poll results	Trans. BB 13
2 min.	o	Conclude the activity by restating that receptivity to influence is a basic political responsibility of elected public officials.	
	o	Refer to Idea Paper 4, "Authority and Power," for a summary of these ideas.	Idea Paper 4 Authority and Power
		-- Local control of education is enhanced through local influence of the school board.	

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time: 10 min.	Activity 7: Workshop Wrap-up and Evaluation	
	Leader Focus: Should you choose to conclude the workshop at this point, it is important to provide participants with an overall summary of the proceedings. Also, participants will now have the opportunity to evaluate the workshop presentation.	
	o On Worksheet 6, ask participants to record any new ideas they have received from the workshop on the political roles of school boards.	Worksheet 6
	o Summarize the workshop proceedings.	
	o Ask participants to complete and hand in the evaluation forms.	Workshop Evaluation

SECTION 3: PRESENTING THE WORKSHOP

WORKSHOP 2

STRENGTHENING RELATIONS AT THE STATE LEVEL

To The Leader: This unit of Building Bridges focuses upon the political roles of school boards at the state level. Included in the unit are information and activities designed to help develop participants' understanding of the legislative process and their roles in it.

Included in the unit are the following:

- A focusing activity, designed to bring participants' attention to the topic
- Information about the role and authority of the state education agency
- Information about state legislative education leadership
- Information about interest groups and their influence upon legislators
- Information about legislators' attitudes towards educators and educational issues

The workshop plan or design is outlined below, along with estimated times and resources needed for each activity. Study it carefully before attempting to present the workshop. You will find additional background reading in Section 5 of this manual.

WORKSHOP PROCEDURES

Total Workshop
Time: 5 hours, 20 min.

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time: 10 min.	Activity 1: Focusing Activity: Local Control Leader Focus: Participants may be thinking about earlier workshop activities or other concerns at this point. The focusing activity helps them make a transition from these to the themes of this workshop. Also, an expectation for active participation is developed early in the workshop.	
2 min.	o Ask participants to quickly respond to the the questions in their booklets:	

TIME			MATERIALS
	--	1. What does local control of schools mean to you?	Worksheet 1
	--	2. What are some of the most important areas for local control (programs, teacher selection and performance, finance, etc.)?	
3 min.	o	Ask participants to share their answers to the questions with other members of their small groups.	
5 min.	o	Ask several volunteers to share their answers with the total group.	
	o	Quickly summarize the ideas from the activity.	

Total Time: 15 min.

Activity 2: Local Control and Intergovernmental Relations

Leader Focus: In this activity, participants will become aware of recent trends in federal/state/local roles in education.

3 min. o Point out that, on the basis of the Tenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, education is a state responsibility.

2 min. o Emphasize that the "New Federalism" seems to once again take the view that education is a state responsibility. The federal government is "returning" responsibility for educational programs to states.

2 min. o Emphasize that school boards, representing local governance of school districts, serve by the authorization of and at the pleasure of state legislatures.

3 min. o Point out that local control of schools, while a cherished tradition, is now more complex since:

-- State governments are assuming more responsibility for education (funding and programs).

-- Other governments and courts have recently become involved in education concerns and issues.

(Give examples from your own state.)

TIME			MATERIALS
2 min.	o	Emphasize that the current reality, and an expected trend for the future, is one of "intergovernmental control" of public schools.	
3 min.	o	Using the transparency, develop the definition of politics. Emphasize that many of the solutions to problems and issues in education are political/policy solutions, and point out that school boards have an important political role to play at the state level.	Trans. BB 4 Politics

Total Time 35 min.

Activity 3: Public Perceptions of Local Control

Leader Focus: This activity will help participants understand the public attitudes toward local control and state/federal involvement in public education.

4 min.	o	Ask participants to answer the three questions on Worksheet 2. 1. What level of government should determine the curriculum of our schools? 2. Do you think that state and federal regulations are more likely to help or hinder public education here? Why? 3. In the years ahead, would you like to see the local school board have greater responsibility for running the schools, or less, than they do today?	Participant Booklet Worksheet 2
3 min.	o	Ask participants to respond to the first question by raising their hands as you read each possible answer.	
2 min.	o	Use the transparency to demonstrate the public response to the Gallup Poll questions.	Trans. BB 14 Who Should Decide...
3 min.	o	Ask for any comment or discussion of the information.	
4 min.	o	Ask participants to raise their hands according to their responses to question 2.	

TIME			MATERIALS
		Quickly state the approximate percentages for each response: A. Help B. Hinder C. No Difference D. Don't Know	
3 min.	o	Using the transparency, show the Gallup Poll results to the question. Compare and discuss the data and reasons given.	Trans. BB 15 State and Federal Regulations
4 min.	o	Ask participants to raise their hands according to their responses to question 3. Quickly summarize the approximate percentages for each response. A. Greater Responsibility B. Less Responsibility C. About the Same D. Don't Know	
3 min.	o	Using the transparency, show the results of the Gallup Poll in answer to the question. Compare and discuss the information. Again, point out the support for local control.	Trans. BB 16 Local Responsibility
4 min.	o	Using the transparency, show the Gallup Poll results about public confidence in American institutions. Make the following points: -- Confidence in public schools, while declining over the past ten years, is second only to that in churches. -- People seem to have greatest confidence in institutions closest to "home" because they feel they can have access to them. -- Public confidence in schools is a highly political issue because it affects local support for schools, and it affects legislators' perceptions of problems and solutions.	Trans. BB 17 Public Confidence

TIME			MATERIALS
		-- The poll data would indicate that public confidence will decline if state control increases.	
3 min.	o	Ask participants to offer other comments about the data.	
2 min.	o	Conclude the activity by reviewing the Gallup Poll transparencies, emphasizing several points:	Trans. BB 15 Trans. BB 16 Trans. BB 17
		-- The data point to strong popular support of local control of schools.	
		-- The data point to significant popular distrust of state/federal regulation and control.	
		-- The data indicate an important political force which might be mobilized in support of schools and local control.	
		-- The information is an important tool for school board members in their communications with legislators.	
	o	Point out poll summaries in participant booklet for later reference.	Idea Paper 1 Public Perceptions

Total Time: 60 min.

Activity 4: Examining the Role of the State Education Agency in Our State

Leader Focus: Through this activity, participants will understand the role and authority of the State Education Agency (SEA) in their state. Through an assessment activity, they will determine areas of SEA authority of particular interest and identify ways of communicating with the SEA.

2 min.	o	Introduce the activity by outlining purposes and procedures.
2 min.	o	Point out that constitutionally, public education is a state responsibility and that legislatures have traditionally delegated much authority to local school boards.

TIME			MATERIALS
2 min.	o	Cite appropriate state statutes at this point.	
2 min.	o	Emphasize that in the past 10-15 years, state legislatures have become increasingly involved in education issues and concerns, such as finance, accountability, collective bargaining and others.	
2 min.	o	Again, point out specific examples in your state.	
3 min.	o	Point out that the legislature typically makes the State Education Agency (state board, chief state school officer, and state department of education) responsible for implementing new legislation and federal programs. -- The SEA carries out its responsibility by promulgating regulations, specifications on how legislation will be carried out. -- As a result of this process, SEAs have gained considerable authority for many areas of education in the recent past.	
2 min.	o	Emphasize that it is important for school board members to understand the role and authority of the SEA in their state and to find ways of participating in the development of regulations issued by this agency.	
5 min.	o	Ask participants working individually to complete Worksheet 3, "Role and Authority of the State Education Agency."	Worksheet 3
10 min.	o	Ask discussion leaders at each table to summarize the ratings for each group and prepare a short report.	
5 min.	o	Record the group report results on the transparency.	Trans. BB 18
2 min.	o	Point out areas of greatest discrepancy in the ratings.	
10 min.	o	Ask groups to discuss the question, "How can school boards act to reduce the gap in the ratings?"	

TIME			MATERIALS
10 min.	o	Ask for summary reports from discussion leaders. Record key ideas on blackboard, newsprint, or transparency.	
3 min.	o	Review and summarize the activity, pointing out important issues and ideas.	

Total Time 15 min.

Activity 5: Understanding State Education Legislative Leaders

Leader Focus: In this activity, participants will understand some of the important characteristics of state education legislative leaders.

2 min. o Introduce the activity by pointing out that getting to know state education legislators is a prerequisite to effective legislative involvement.

3 min. o Using the transparency, make the following points. State education legislative leaders: — Trans. BB 19 State Educ. Legislative Leaders

-- Are thoroughly experienced in education and in politics

-- Have had a long-term involvement in education

-- Have seniority in state legislatures

-- Are highly committed to public education

-- Serve on both money and policy committees

-- Give equal attention to finance and policy

-- Get most of their information from state department of education

-- Have connections with groups and organizations within and outside of state

-- Are increasingly involved in managing conflict over money and control issues

-- Rely greatly on own staff people

TIME			MATERIALS
2 min.	o	Qualify this presentation by stating that these characteristics may be different in your state. Add any information about your states' legislative leaders now.	
5 min.	o	Point out that while education is currently well represented in state legislatures, changes are likely to take place in the near future. This is true because education is a less appealing issue than it once was, since: -- Budgets are tight. -- There is increasing competition for public sector resources. -- Enrollments are declining. -- There is much infighting within education family. -- Public confidence has slipped.	
2 min.	o	Emphasize that state education legislative leadership bears watching as these changes begin to have their impact.	
1 min.	o	Conclude the activity by pointing out that one important area for school board member involvement is in the elections of state legislators who are concerned about education.	

Total Time 45 min.	Activity 6: Legislators Evaluate Interest Group Activity		
	Leader Focus: In this activity, participants will review information about interest group activity in influencing legislators. They will identify two major strategies for influencing legislators.		
2 min.	o	Introduce the activity by pointing out that legislators identify the education lobby as one of the strongest in the state. In some, it's the most powerful. In others, it's among the most powerful.	

TIME			MATERIALS
4 min.	o	Using the transparency, outline the sources of information for legislative leaders and state board members. Make the following points: -- The data indicate most frequently used sources, not importance placed upon them. -- Legislators are not <u>dependent</u> on their information. Legislatures have capabilities to carry out their own analysis of information.	Trans. BB 20 Information Sources
2 min.	o	Ask for questions and comments on the data.	
5 min.	o	Using the transparency, show how legislators evaluate the effectiveness of statewide interest groups. Make the following points: -- Two major strategies are evaluated: information and direct contact. -- The state department of education is rated as having the most overall effectiveness. -- Teacher organizations are more effective in the contacting strategy than in the information strategy. -- School boards associations' information and contact strategies seem to be about equally effective.	Trans. BB 21 Relationships: State Level
2 min.	o	Ask for comment and discussion of the data.	
5 min.	o	Using the transparency, show the data from the local level. Point out the following: -- Only the effectiveness of the contacting strategy is shown. -- School board members are rated fourth in effectiveness in using contacting as a strategy.	Trans. BB 22 Relationships: Local Level
2 min.	o	Ask for comment and discussion of the data.	

TIME			MATERIALS
5 min.	o	Ask individual participants to respond to the questions on Worksheet 4: 1. How can school board members increase their effectiveness in working with legislators? 2. In order to be more effective, what additional information do school board members need?	Worksheet 4
10 min.	o	Ask participants to share and discuss their ideas at the work tables. Ask each table group to identify a discussion leader who will give a short report of the group's ideas.	
5 min.	o	Ask for short summary reports from each discussion leader. Record ideas on newsprint or blackboard.	
3 min.	o	Conclude the activity by reviewing the information given on transparencies and in discussion.	
	o	Point out Idea Paper 2 in participant booklet for later reference.	Idea Paper 2 Credibility

Total Time 50 min.

Activity 7: Some Issues in Education Governance

Leader Focus: In this activity, participants will formulate their positions on nine policy issues in education governance. As a result of comparing their positions with those of legislators, participants will begin formulating responses and strategies for communicating with legislators.

5 min. o Introduce the activity by outlining four basic policy issues which legislators are concerned with in public education. These are:

-- Policy making responsibility and roles-- What roles should legislature, state board and local educators play?

TIME			MATERIALS
		-- Local control of schools-- Is this a viable principle? -- Need for change in schools-- How can change be stimulated? -- Educator accountability-- How can legislature be assured that the best use is being made of public revenues?	
5 min.	o	Ask participants to respond to the questionnaire on Worksheet 5. Instruct them to work individually.	Worksheet 5 Nine Policy Issues...
3 min.	o	Ask each group to identify a discussion leader. Instruct the discussion leader to quickly tally the responses to the questionnaire within the group.	
3 min.	o	Using the transparencies, tally the workshop participants' responses to the questionnaire by asking each discussion leader to give a group report.	Trans. BB 23 Trans. BB 24 Trans. BB 25 Trans. BB 26 Felt tip pen

> Helpful Hint: While completing the participant tally, do not reveal the legislators' or state board members' responses to the questions.

5 min.	o	Quickly report the legislators' and state board members' responses to the questions. Point out areas of similarity and discrepancy between these responses and participants' responses.	Trans. BB 23 Policy Mkg. Trans. BB 24 Loc. Control Trans. BB 25 Need for Ch. Trans. BB 26 Educ. Acct.
3 min.	o	Focusing on the areas of greatest discrepancy, point out that these are areas in which school board members need to develop communication with legislators.	
3 min.	o	Assign each area of discrepancy to a group for further analysis. Refer participants to Worksheet 5 to guide their work.	
15 min.	o	Ask the discussion leader to lead the group in developing a position on the issue.	Worksheet 6 Participant Booklet

TIME			MATERIALS
5 min.	o	Ask discussion leaders to report the group position on the issue and any strategies identified by the group to communicate with legislators.	
	o	Ask for other comments after each group report.	
3 min.	o	Conclude the activity by reviewing the major areas of discrepancy and discussion.	

Total Time 25 min.

Activity 8: Resources for Political Involvement

Leader Focus: This activity will engage participants in analyzing the resources available to them (and other interest groups) for political involvement.

2 min. o Introduce the activity by asking participants the question:

"What strengths or advantages do school board members have in their communications with legislators?"

5 min. o Ask participants to respond to the question. Paraphrase and summarize their responses.

5 min. o Using the transparency, show and discuss the data on legislative effectiveness of interest groups. Make the following points: — Trans. BB 27 Legislative Effectiveness

-- Teacher organizations have the most numbers, money and staff.

-- School board organizations have fewer numbers, money and staff.

-- School board organizations are second in effectiveness to teacher organizations, and in many states, are equal in effectiveness to teacher organizations.

-- School board organizations are more efficient in the legislative process than other organizations. They are rated as being highly effective despite using fewer resources (less money, fewer numbers and fewer staff).

TIME			MATERIALS
5 min.	o	Using the transparency, point out that resources for legislative involvement include: -- Money -- Numbers (membership) -- Staff -- Credibility	Trans. BB 28 Resources
3 min.	o	Emphasize that school board members' credibility is extremely high with legislators, because school board members: -- Are elected officials -- Represent constituencies -- Have connections with business and civic organizations	
5 min.	o	Conclude the activity by reviewing the key ideas, and by re-emphasizing credibility as an important and underutilized resource of school board members in legislative involvement.	

Total Time 30 min.

Activity 9: Communicating with Legislators

Leader Focus: In this activity, participants will examine some of their own attitudes towards legislative involvement and review some effective techniques in communicating with legislators.

5 min.	o	Begin the activity by asking participants to respond to the items in the true/false quiz on Worksheet 7.	Worksheet 7 Legislative Involvement
5 min.	o	Poll the workshop group for responses to each item. Ask for explanations of participants' answers.	
5 min.	o	Give particular attention to items for which there is disagreement among participant responses. Ask for explanations of differing points of view.	

TIME			MATERIALS
5 min.	o	Share the "suggested responses" to the quiz and the rationales for them. Be prepared to discuss these. Do not present these as "right answers." The suggested responses are:	

1. False. During the legislative session, legislators are overloaded with pressures from many sources. The off-season is the best time to get the legislator's attention. The period prior to primary elections is also an excellent time to make your views known.

2. True. However, school board members should not expect too much from these few people. Board members can find additional ways to complement these proposals to legislators at home by explaining how they affect the local school district.

3. False. While professional staff play practical, day-to-day roles during legislative session, board members should communicate with legislators too. Legislators usually listen carefully to communications from constituents.

4. False. Money helps, but one strength often overlooked by board members is the fact that legislators value the views of other elected officials, e.g., school board members--so tell them!

5. False. State legislatures are increasingly enacting laws that have impact upon all aspects of local education. Local school boards are responsible for compliance with these. Your voice helping to formulate them will make them more acceptable at home.

6. False. While board members cannot be expected to spend a great deal of time in the state capitol, the best opportunities for effective communication with legislators are in the home community during the interim between legislative sessions.

TIME			MATERIALS
		7. False. Education is a state function as well as a local one. While mixing partisan politics with local education may not be wise, school board members are elected officials with both local and state responsibilities. 8. True. There is strength in numbers. School board endorsements of legislative resolutions show that more than one or two people support them. 9. False. While more time and attention may need to be given to the process of developing a legislative program, the diversity of opinion of school board members is a strength. The legislature is also a diverse group.	
5 min.	o	Using the transparency, briefly review the points on effective personal communication with legislators: -- Be flexible about your schedule -- Be on time -- Be prepared and clear about your objectives -- Be brief and to the point -- Choose a single spokesman -- Be informal, friendly -- Acknowledge opposing sides in the issue -- Summarize major points covered -- Offer something of value (opportunity for speaking, publications, etc.) -- Follow up in writing	Trans. BB 29 Communicating with Legislators
3 min.	o	Refer to and quickly review the ideas in Idea Paper 3. Suggest that participants share these ideas with other board members at home.	Idea Paper 3 Legislative Involvement
2 min.	o	Conclude the activity with a brief summary of the main ideas.	

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time 25 min.	Activity 10: Planning for Legislative Involvement	
	Leader Focus: In this activity, participants will review a number of suggestions on ways to become involved in the legislative process. The activity is meant to stimulate and initiate planning for involvement.	
5 min.	o Introduce the activity by reviewing the major points about effective legislative involvement: -- Strategies, including information and direct contact -- Timing, including elections, the interim and legislative sessions -- Capitalizing upon strengths, including credibility of school board members	
3 min.	o Refer to and quickly review Idea Paper 4.	Idea Paper 4 Action Ideas
10 min.	o Ask participants, working in groups, to share other ideas which have been effective or might be effective in communicating with legislators.	
5 min.	o Ask discussion leaders to give brief summary reports of some of the ideas. o Encourage participants to pursue planning activities with board members, administrators and community leaders at home.	
2 min.	o Conclude the activity by summarizing the major ideas.	

Total Time: 10 min.	Activity 11: Workshop Wrap-up and Evaluation	
	Leader Focus: In bringing the workshop to a close, participants can benefit from a quick review of objectives, proceedings and key discussions. Participant evaluation provides important information to the workshop leader.	

TIME		MATERIALS
	o Quickly review the workshop objectives and agenda.	
	o Provide a brief summary of important ideas and discussions throughout the workshop.	
	o Ask participants to fill out and return the workshop evaluation forms at the back of their booklets.	Workshop Evaluation
	o Thank participants for their attention and work. Release them.	

SECTION 3: PRESENTING THE WORKSHOP

WORKSHOP 3

COALITIONS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

To the Leader: This unit of Building Bridges focuses upon the roles school board members can play in building coalitions in support of the public schools. Included in this unit are information and activities designed to help participants identify the need for coalitions, advantages and disadvantages of coalition membership, and specific steps to take in initiating coalition building with other groups and organizations.

This unit includes the following activities:

- o A focusing activity to bring participants' attention to the topic
- o A definition of coalitions
- o An analysis of advantages and disadvantages of coalition membership
- o An identification of forces helping and hindering school board coalition-building activity
- o A list of possible coalition-building steps and activities at the local level

The workshop plan or design is outlined below, along with estimated times and resources needed for each activity. Study it carefully before attempting to present the workshop. You will find additional background reading in Section 5 of this manual. In particular, read and familiarize yourself with Toward New Coalitions for Public Education.

WORKSHOP PROCEDURES

Total Workshop
Time: 2 hours, 35 min.

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time: 25 min.	**Activity 1: Focusing on Coalitions** Leader Focus: This activity will help participants understand the scope and focus of this workshop and to make a transition from other concerns to the workshop topic.	
5 min.	o Ask participants to answer the following questions in the participant booklet: -- What are the three greatest challenges facing our school system now and in the immediate future?	Work Sheet 1 Issues and Potentials

TIME			MATERIALS
		-- In addition to school board members, what other groups and individuals are expressing concern about these challenges (for example, parents, teachers, administrators, county commissioners, etc.)?	
		-- Are these groups and individuals now meeting and working together to address the challenges?	
	o	Appoint a reporter at each table and instruct this person to prepare a brief report of the work group progress.	
10 min.	o	Ask participants to quickly share their answers to the questions with other participants at their tables.	
5 min.	o	Ask reporters to give brief reports from work groups.	
	o	On newsprint, blackboard, or transparency, record the main ideas from the reports, using the headings:	Newsprint, Blackboard, or Transparency
		-- Challenges	
		-- Groups and Individuals	
		-- Working Together	
3 min.	o	Summarize the activity by pointing out that participants have been analyzing the potentials for <u>coalitions</u> for public education.	
2 min.	o	Share the following definition of <u>coalition</u> and relate it to the ideas from the work groups.	Trans. BB 30 Coalitions
		-- Coalition: a temporary alliance of factions, parties or nations	

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time: 10 min.	Activity 2: Workshop Objectives and Agenda Leader Focus: This activity, building upon the previous one, provides participants with information about the specifics of the workshop--what it will cover, its length, and the kinds of activities involved. It helps participants develop realistic expectations about the workshop.	
5 min.	o On newsprint, transparency, or verbally, clearly state the workshop objectives. These include: -- To understand why coalitions are needed in public education -- To understand the major advantages and disadvantages of coalition activity -- To identify issues and potential members for coalition building -- To identify and acknowledge some barriers to coalition activity -- To identify some specific actions and steps which contribute to building coalitions at the local level	Newsprint or Transparency
2 min.	o Describe the time frame and kinds of activities involved in the workshop. Use newsprint or transparencies if possible.	Newsprint
3 min.	o Ask for any comments or questions regarding the objectives and agenda. Be prepared to respond to suggestions for areas of emphasis, etc.	
Total Time: 60 min.	Activity 3: Why Build Coalitions? Leader Focus: The information in this activity helps participants develop a perspective about coalitions in the politics of education and a rationale for engaging in coalition activities.	

TIME			MATERIALS
5 min.	o	Introduce the activity by giving some background on political coalitions in education. Make the following points: -- Coalitions among board members, teachers, administrators and parents have been an important source of support for schools in the past. -- This coalition has come under serious stress over the past 20 years as a result of labor/management issues. -- As a result, legislators increasingly say that since education interest groups are often in opposition to one another, the legislative process has become conflict-ridden. This situation has several disadvantages: --- It puts legislators in a conflict management role, mediating among interest groups. --- It puts legislators in the position of taking sides. --- It makes education less appealing as an area of interest and commitment for legislators.	
5 min.	o	Using the transparency, develop a definition of coalitions. Emphasize the following points: -- Coalitions are temporary. -- They are issue-specific. -- They may require sacrificing certain positions for the sake of a larger objective.	Trans. BB 30 Coalitions
15 min.	o	Ask participants, working in groups, to discuss the questions on Worksheet 2 and develop a report of their ideas.	Worksheet 2 Goals and Barriers
5 min.	o	Ask discussion leaders to give group reports on goals and barriers.	

TIME			MATERIALS
5 min.	o	Summarize the group reports and add the following ideas. -- Barriers to coalitions will continue to be labor management issues, such as: --- Tenure --- Probationary teachers --- Personnel evaluation	
5 min.	o	Emphasize that coalition building among boards, teachers, administrators, parents, and business/ industry will continue to be hampered by these issues, but that some larger, more important goals in public education may now be at stake.	
5 min.	o	Point out that some of the larger issues under discussion currently are: -- Level of state support for public schools -- Tuition tax credit or voucher plans for private schools -- Add other ideas from your state situation	
10 min.	o	Using the transparency, emphasize the following characteristics of the "political climate" for public schools: -- Eroding political base because of declining enrollments--fewer than 20 percent of the electorate have school-aged children -- Aging population -- Centralization of decision making, increasing state control -- Decline in public confidence in schools -- Declining enrollments in schools -- Increasing competition for public sector resources at state level -- Declining political appeal of education	Trans. BB 31 Political Climate

TIME			MATERIALS
2 min.	o	Point out that in this political climate, coalitions among education interest groups will be increasingly important.	
	o	Add any information about the political climate in your state.	
2 min.	o	Refer participants to the idea paper on coalitions.	Idea Paper 1 Coalitions
1 min.	o	Conclude the activity by reviewing the major ideas.	

Total Time: 45 min.

Activity 4: Identifying Coalition Potentials

Leader Focus: This activity affords participants the opportunity to think broadly about potentials for coalitions with a number of groups concerned with education.

2 min.	o	Introduce the activity by stating the purpose and procedure. Refer to instructions on Worksheet 3.	Worksheet 3
3 min.	o	Quickly review the elements of effective coalition politics, including:	
		-- Mutual concern for issues	Trans. BB 30
		-- Goals shared by all members	
		-- Agreements regarding working relationships	
		-- Possible sacrifice of self-interest for larger objective	
10 min.	o	Ask participants to complete Worksheet 3 individually.	Worksheet 3
15 min.	o	Ask participants to share their responses to Worksheet 3 in pairs or trios.	
10 min.	o	Ask several volunteers to give a brief report to include the following.	

TIME			MATERIALS
		-- Which three candidates showed the greatest promise for coalitions?	
		-- What were the key mutual interests and concerns of these groups?	
	o	Record key report ideas on blackboard, newsprint or transparency.	
3 min.	o	Ask for any further discussion or comment.	
2 min.	o	Summarize the purpose, procedures and major ideas from the activity.	
	o	Refer participants to Idea Paper 2, "Suggestions for Building Coalitions."	Idea Paper 2

Total Time 15 min.	Activity 5: Workshop Summary, Wrap-up and Evaluation		
		Leader Focus: Closure of the workshop is as important as the opening. In this activity, participants will review the workshop proceedings, will make any final comments, and will evaluate the workshop. They will then be free to leave.	
5 min.	o	Using the objectives and the transparencies, provide a concise summary of the workshop proceedings. Be sure to acknowledge the work and ideas of participants.	Objectives Trans. BB 30 Trans. BB 31
5 min.	o	Ask for any final questions or comments.	
5 min.	o	Direct participants to complete and hand in the workshop evaluation form at the end of the booklet.	Workshop Evaluation
	o	Compliment participants for their attention, enthusiasm and hard work. Release them.	

SECTION 4: EVALUATING THE WORKSHOP

Evaluation of processes and materials has been a built-in feature of these workshops during their development and testing phases. As a workshop leader, you are encouraged to continue evaluating the workshop in order to find ways to improve it or modify it for your purposes.

Testing

Initial testing, carried out by the developers, focused on issues of appropriateness and match. Here, participants were asked to comment on:

- Language used in presentations and materials
- Clarity of objectives for activities
- Relevance of the topic for school boards
- Receptivity of participants to presentation styles, activities and materials

In later stages of development, other evaluation questions were asked of participants. These questions sought to gain feedback to workshop leaders about issues of:

- Adequacy of treatment of the topic
- Time allocations for various portions of the workshop
- Participants' ratings of the effectiveness of workshop leaders' presentations and of workshop activities and materials

Why Evaluate?

Continuous participant feedback to you as you present the workshop can be helpful in several ways:

- Personal growth and development. Whether you are new to workshop presentations or a seasoned veteran, participant feedback can be helpful in your personal and professional development. Participant evaluation of your presentation style, of how helpful you were in their learning, and of how you handle time and materials can be invaluable to you as a source of growth.

- Adapting the workshop. Participant feedback can give you ideas and suggestions which will be helpful to you in planning future presentations of the workshop. Perhaps more time needs to be spent in one area. Perhaps objectives need to be made clearer. Perhaps participants grew too tired during a two-hour evening presentation. These participant perceptions and feelings will provide information for you to consider as you continuously adapt and modify the workshop in successive presentations.

- Improving materials and activities. Participant feedback will give you clues as to how to improve upon the basic workshop structure and materials. Perhaps you will need to add more specific legal or statutory information about your state. Perhaps you will need to provide a description of the legislative process in your state, or a list of legislators and districts.

Again, participant feedback can be an important basis for decisions like these.

What to Evaluate

An adequate evaluation of a workshop provides you, as workshop leader, the kinds of information you need to determine how well the presentation achieved your objectives. It also gives you an indication of how well the presentation met the needs and expectations of participants.

- Objectives--The objectives of the workshop are stated in terms of knowledge/information which participants are expected to gain, skills they are expected to develop, or attitudes they are expected to have as a result of the experience.

  Evaluation of objectives can involve questions of clarity (Are the objectives clear to participants?), questions of appropriateness or match (Do the objectives meet participants' needs and expectations?) and questions of achievement (Do participants gain in information, skills and attitudes?).

  The first two kinds of questions are relatively easy to assess during the workshop. The third, while very important, is the most difficult to assess.

- Presenter--The skills of the presenter in conducting the workshop is another area for evaluation.

  Questions in this area might focus on the presenter's delivery of lecturettes, helpfulness in workshop activities, knowledge of the subject and other concerns.

- Workshop processes--These include the procedures and activities designed to result in learning. Among the workshop processes are lecturettes, small and large group discussions, quizzes and questionnaires.

  Evaluation of these processes involves questions regarding their contribution to participants' understanding, learning and skill development.

Questions for Evaluating This Workshop

The questions below are those included in the participant booklet for evaluation of presentations of these workshops. They represent a comprehensive and adequate set of workshop evaluation questions, speaking to objectives, presenter and processes.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Please answer the following questions frankly. Your responses will help to improve the presentation of the workshop in the future.

1. My overall rating of this workshop is:

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent		Fair		Poor

Comments:

2. The workshop objectives were:

_____ 1. Clear to me

_____ 2. Somewhat clear

_____ 3. A mystery to me

Comments:

3. What I expected from the workshop, but did not get, was. . .

4. A. The workshop leader(s)' knowledge of the topic was:

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent		Fair		Poor

Comments:

B. The workshop leader(s)' presentation of the workshop (instructions, clarity, etc.) was:

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent		Fair		Poor

Comments:

C. The workshop leader(s)' helpfulness to me and other participants was:

1	2	3	4	5
Very Helpful		Helpful		Not Helpful

Comments:

5. I learned most from

_____ Lecturettes given by the leader

_____ Small group discussions

_____ The reading material

_____ Questions discussed in the group

_____ Other activities

6. The most valuable thing(s) I learned from the workshop was. . .

SECTION 5: RESOURCES

This section of the manual contains background materials for the workshop leader to study before presenting the Building Bridges workshops. Included here are the following papers:

- School Boards in the Politics of Education, 1982
  by Keats Garman.
  This paper serves as a background resource to the workshops.

- Toward New Coalitions for Public Education, 1981
  by Stephen K. Bailey
  This paper is an excerpt from a longer article by Bailey and serves as a resource for Workshop 3.

- The Politics of Boardsmanship, A Panel Discussion, 1980
  School board members, a superintendent and a legislator discuss whether and in what ways board members are politicians. The paper serves as a general resource for all three workshops.

- How Can Associations Be Effective in a Pluralistic Society, 1976
  by C. Montgomery Johnson.
  The paper deals with effective board leadership and is a resource for all three workshops.

SCHOOL BOARDS IN THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION

Keats Garman, Senior Program Associate
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Part I: Historical Background and Current Trends in the Politics of Education

Introduction:

Intergovernmental relations. Lobbying. Special interest groups. Constituencies. Even a cursory review of school board literature reveals that these and other political terms have a currency and a sense of urgency about them within the school board movement. The increasing use of these terms in discussions among school board members, and within their state and national associations, is a clear indication that public education has entered a political era, perhaps unprecedented in its challenges and opportunities. At stake in the politics of education of our time are such critical policy issues as the continuation of local control of the schools, the roles the federal government plays in public education, the shape and form of influence of state legislatures and state departments of education, and the role of state and federal courts.

It is the purpose of this paper to emphasize the political role of school boards and their members, because the tradition of local control of schools is best represented by them. And, in an era of increasing political activity in education, political awareness and action by board members at the local, state and national levels is imperative if local control is to survive as a viable tradition. As pointed out by scholars, in recent literature, and restated in many ways by an increasing number of school board members, "...'The no politics doctrine of schoolmen' is not only inconsistent with reality but also self-defeating as an effective political strategy. Educators cannot be isolated from the general political system for their internal operations and expect the political system to automatically provide them with the necessary financial resources." (Kirst, pp 218)

School board members must join professional educators in shedding this "no politics doctrine" and in forging new political strategies to secure the policy decisions and resources needed to operate the schools and promote local control of the public schools.

School Boards: A Brief Political History

A hundred years ago, schools were substantially controlled by local lay boards and school committees. Several significant movements and trends have led to significant changes in this, and have contributed to a different picture of local school governance.

- The rise of the superintendency led to negotiated compromise of board and superintendent areas of responsibility. In effect, boards delegated considerable authority for administering the schools to the superintendent, while retaining the overall responsibility. This change grew out a move to make the schools more efficient in the mid-1800s, culminating in reforms in the early 1890s.

- The municipal reform movement was also aimed at making local government more efficient and less vulnerable to corruption. For school boards, the results of this movement were to:
  - -- Reduce the size of school boards from 20 or more to the present 5-7 members
  - -- Change the elections of school board members from a ward or district basis to an at-large basis
  - -- Remove school board elections from partisan politics
  - -- Separate school board elections from municipal election times
- The school consolidation movement, another informal national policy designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public schools, resulted in further erosion of the political base of school boards. Consider the following figures (Guthrie, 1980).
  - -- In 1930, there were some 128,000 school districts in the United States. Each district had at least one school board. This meant that there was a board member for every 230 citizens.
  - -- In 1980, the number of school districts had been reduced to some 16,000. This means that there is now a board member for every 3,500 citizens.
- This erosion of the "representative power" of school boards has had the following consequences.
  - -- More school decisions are now made by fewer people who are more removed from the local electorate.
  - -- Many citizens who feel that they are not well represented have organized for greater citizen involvement in school decision making.
  - -- More school board elections are now contested than formerly, where there were more positions available.

In summary, the full blown local control of schools by school boards of a hundred years ago has been substantially modified by reform efforts aimed at improving the efficiency of public schools. Among these are:

- The rise of the superintendency, with increasing authority delegated to this office from school boards
- The municipal reform movement, aimed at removing school boards from the sometimes corrupt politics of larger cities
- The school consolidation movement, which has reduced the numbers and the representational power of school boards

Current Trends in the Politics of Education

There is evidence that the 1980s and 1990s will be an increasingly difficult era in public education, and that new political awareness and strategies will need to be developed by school board members, administrators, teachers and parents to successfully compete in this turbulent climate.

The evidence is in the form of trends in demographic and economic patterns affecting the schools. Among these are:

- o A shrinking political base for the public schools

  The political support base for the schools has always been a relatively narrow one, made up largely of parents of school-aged children. Now, public school enrollments are declining and the support base is shrinking. For example, in 1971, public school enrollments peaked at 51 million children, grades K-12. In 1979, the K-12 enrollments had dropped to 48 million children. By 1985, K-12 enrollments is estimated to be 43 million. At the same time, enrollments in non-public schools have been increasing. In 1968, these enrollments represented 14% of all school aged children. This figure had declined to 7% by 1975, but jumped again to about 11% in 1980. These non-public school enrollments are projected to increase in the decade ahead, aided probably by some form of tuition-tax credit or voucher plans at the federal and state levels.

  The enrollment decline is paralleled by a shrinking adult support base for the public schools. For example, in 1971, 45% of all registered voters nationally had children in school, including higher education. By 1980, only 33% of the registered voters had children in school. By 1985, the projection is that less than 30% of registered voters will have children in school; and the "effective electorate," e.g., those who actually vote in school elections, will be less than this figure.

  This decline in the adult support base for public schools means that fewer than 30% of registered voters will have a direct link with the public schools by 1985.

- o A continuation of centralization of educational decision making

  In an earlier section, the impact of the school consolidation movement upon the "representational power" of school boards was discussed. One implication has been the dramatic reduction in the number of school board members nationally. Consequently, more decisions are being made by fewer people at a point further removed from the electorate than was true 30 years ago.

  The increasing role of state legislatures, state departments of education and state courts in decision making is further evidence of a continuing trend toward centralization. As states assume a greater responsibility for school finance, they also impose a clearer set of state priorities for

funding and stricter guidelines for accountability in the expenditure of funds. And, as states assume a greater role in the distribution of federal funds (whether categorical or block grants), the regulatory and accountability pressures still prevail.

Another factor contributing to the increasing centralization of educational decision making lies in the fact that the traditional political parties now mean less than they used to. The electorate tends to focus more on candidates' stands on the issues rather than voting the party ticket. What this means is that legislators' party loyalties are weaker, so that it is more difficult for party leadership to organize state legislatures. More and more often, organization and leadership result from deals or compromises struck between the parties before the legislative session. Further, there is beginning to be a trend toward circumvention of the traditional policy committee structure. Now, bills are beginning to go directly to fiscal (or even conference) committees first. Again, the result of these trends is that fewer individuals are directly involved in the decision making process. Also, special interest lobbyists gain an advantage in this situation, since there are fewer legislators to influence.

- Greater competition for public sector resources

The increasing state fiscal control of public education, resulting from attempts to equalize school finance and from efforts to control education expenditures, places education funding in direct competition with other public sector programs. And, since the population is growing older (the median age in 1980 was 30.1 years), programs for senior citizens may well be the area of growing competition.

The needs and demands of an aging population for programs and services is likely to represent an increasing challenge to the funding of public education at the state level; and even though senior citizens shouldn't be expected to oppose public school funding directly, a number of other important priorities (health care, housing, transportation) will compete for their attention.

One problem facing public education in an era of increasing competition with other public sector programs is that it is difficult to demonstrate efficiency. Public education does not as easily lend itself to cost/benefit analysis as some other programs do, so the advocates of public schools will be working at a disadvantage as they compete for public sector resources at the state level.

Summary and Conclusions

In this section, several trends which will have impact on the political climate of education in the coming decades have been identified and discussed. Among them are:

- The shrinking political base of public schools

- o A continuation of the trend toward centralization of educational decision making

- o An increasing competition for public sector resources at the state level

When taken in combination, these trends portend a more highly politicized era for the public schools in the immediate future. School board members, administrators, teachers, parents, and other advocates are going to have to face up to the emerging politics of education and find new roles and strategies for effective political participation at local, state, and national levels.

The remainder of this background paper is devoted to discussing ideas which can contribute to board members' analysis of their political roles and challenges.

Part II: A Summary of Research on the Political Role of School Boards

Politics--A Definition for School Boards

This paper, and the related workshop, strongly encourages school boards and their members to strengthen their self-concept, their awareness and their actions as local/state politicians.

It is not intended to be an identification with or increase in partisan political activity--after all, there's no Republican or Democratic way to run a school system. Rather, it is intended to make the connection between policy making and political activity.

The definition of politics, for this paper and the related workshop, is this:

> Politics is the competition surrounding the definition and control of education policy (Roscoe Martin, 1962).

As this definition suggests, policy making is the exercise of political power. In many areas, public school policy making is a controversial and competitive arena, with many actors. Certainly school boards, by legal mandate and by public expectation, are the local school system's policy makers, and, by this definition, its principal politicians.

As elected public officials, school board members are local community representatives to the school system.

While there currently seems to be an increasing number of school board candidates running on single issues, nevertheless parents and other community members have specific expectations for representation by the board members

they elect. As found by Goldhammer (1964), the public expects its elected school representatives to:

- Promote the public interest.
  Community members elect school board members to represent the broad community interest in education.

- Uphold community traditions and values.
  Each community has unique traditions, beliefs and values regarding education. School board members are expected to understand and reflect these in board action.

- Listen to grievances.
  Parents and other community members view board members as people they know and trust. Board members often hear rumors, complaints or grievances before they come to the attention of professional educators.

- Supervise the professionals.
  Community members view the school board as the means of ensuring accountability of the school system to local people. They expect the board to monitor the activities of the professional educators.

- Conserve resources.
  Taxpayers expect government to expend money wisely and well.

- Promote rights and interests.
  School board members are elected to promote rights and interests of students, parents and taxpayers. Likewise, professional educators expect the board to promote and protect their rights and interests.

- Improve education.
  Parents and other community members expect board members to carry out improvements in the educational program. This may mean emphasizing the basics, vocational/career education or academic offerings.

School board candidates hold many of these same expectations as they campaign for office. For example, a recent survey (NSBA, 1979) reveals the following as the top five campaign issues reported by recently elected board members.

School taxes	28%
Rising costs	25%
Instructional program "Back to Basics"	23%
Superintendent's performance	22%
Student discipline	20%

The Representativeness of School Boards

How representative are school boards? This is the subject of a great deal of research interest in recent years. For example, in one Gallup Poll survey (NSBA, 1974) a cross section of the nation's adult population was asked how well boards represented the views and opinions of people like themselves. Here were the results:

7% gave school boards an Excellent rating

29% gave school boards a Good rating

23% gave school boards a Fair rating

10% gave school boards a Poor rating

30% said that they did not know

One of the surprising aspects of these results is the high proportion (30%) of the respondents who said that they "did not know" how well their local school board represented their views. These results are consistent with other findings reported in the Gallup Polls almost every year since, and prompted George Gallup himself to comment:

> "The function of the school board is largely unknown or misunderstood. Too often, serving on a local board is a thankless job. The fact that the school board is supposed to represent the public and carry out its wishes in educational matters gets lost in day-to-day operations, school personnel problems, and finance. All of which leaves too little time, as school board members complain, to deal with the educational process itself." (PDK, 1978)

Another researcher (Ziegler, 1977) has argued that since school boards by and large adopt their superintendents' recommendations for policy decisions, they are not particularly representative of community constituencies. Rather, in this argument, boards tend to represent the professional educators' viewpoints to the community.

Who Influences the Board?

Related to the question of representation is that of influence. There is some research information regarding who has influence upon the school board.

In one study (NSBA, 1975), a cross section of American adults were asked whose views and opinions have the most influence with the school board. The results were the following:

> School administrators were identified as influential by 43% of the respondents.
>
> Teachers and teacher organizations were identified as influential by 33% of the respondents.

Parents were identified as influential by 30% of the respondents

Other groups, such as local government, politically powerful groups, state government and local political parties were identified as less influential with the school board.

In another study (PDK, 1969), the results are surprising and underscore the public lack of understanding of the function of the school board.

In response to the question, "...is there any group of people in this community that has more influence than it should have in the way schools are run?", 20% of a cross section of American adults answered "yes," 46% answered "no," and 34% answered "don't know." Those who answered "yes" to the question identified the following as having too much influence:

The local school board

Local politicians

Minority organizations

The P.T.A.

The wealthy

In another study, the political motivation and involvement of school boards was analyzed (PDK, 1978). Asked if "...local politics play a part in decisions made by the board?," a cross section of adults answered in the following way:

44% said "yes."

39% said "no."

17% said "don't know."

Based upon other Gallup Poll information, the respondents to these questions were thinking broadly about political involvement and not specifically in terms of local political party involvement.

Responsiveness of School Boards

Responsiveness is a concept closely related to representation and influence. A school board can be responsive to its constituencies in five different ways, as outlined by researchers in this topic (Tucker and Ziegler, 1977). One way boards are responsive is through policies. This policy responsiveness refers to the degree of fit between the board's policy decisions and constituents' preferences and demands. The researchers conclude that school boards rate quite highly in this area.

Another kind of responsiveness lies in rendering services to individual constituents. Again, school board members perform well in this service responsiveness, not so much through actions of the board as through referrals of individual parent concerns to administrative channels.

A third kind of board responsiveness lies in providing benefits to a constituency as a whole. Since board members, unlike legislators, do not represent specific districts or geographic constituencies, this public goods responsiveness does not apply to them as much as to politicians in state or federal government. Still, the awarding of contracts, the selection of sites for new school buildings, responding to special interest groups are examples of board responsiveness in this area.

Symbolic public actions of board members which give constituents the feeling of being represented is another kind of responsiveness. School boards don't rate especially high in this area, although they rate as well as other politicians and governing units. Examples of this kind of symbolic responsiveness might be: "giving teacher of the year" awards; attending local citizens meetings; visiting schools; and seeking citizen input on educational issues.

A fifth kind of school board responsiveness lies in the area of receptivity to influence from the public. If constituents feel that board members have listened to them and considered their viewpoint, they would rate the board as receptive. The researchers find that school board meetings do not rate highly in this kind of responsiveness but that private contacts between constituents and school board members do rate highly.

Continuing Popular Support of the Local Control Tradition

Despite the increasing influence on local schools exerted by state and federal governments in recent years, there continues to be a strong popular feeling that school policy decisions are best made locally. Several studies illustrate this local control sentiment.

In a Gallup Poll survey of a cross section of American adults (PDK, 1976), people were asked if in the years ahead they "...would like to see the local school board have greater responsibility for running the schools, or less, than they do today?"

The following results are supportive of the local control tradition:

67% said that local school boards should have greater responsibility.

10% said less responsibility.

15% said about the same responsibility as now.

8% said "don't know" or gave no answer.

In regard to the relative benefits of state and federal regulation of the schools, another study (PDK, 1978) asked a cross section of American adults whether "...regulations by state and federal government are more likely to help or hinder public education here?"

The results were the following:

23% said regulations help local schools.

44% said regulations hinder local schools.

5% said regulations make no difference.

28% said they didn't know.

Those (44% of the respondents) who said that state and federal regulations hinder the local schools explained their answer by saying that:

> The regulations ignore differences among school districts in nature of problems, wealth, number of minority groups and size. They also opposed specific federal regulations regarding busing, bilingual education and education for handicapped children.

Another Gallup Poll survey (PDK, 1977) contributed further to a picture of clear popular support for the local control tradition, in contrast to state and federal control. When asked whether federal requirements should be "changed to permit local school authorities to decide how the money is to be spent?," a cross section of American adults responded two to one in favor of this idea. The results were:

62% said yes, change to allow local people to decide.

29% said no, should not change.

9% said don't know, or no answer.

Again, the strong support of local fiscal control, even of federally funded educational programs, is evident in these responses. One would expect a similar response to a question about change in state regulations.

Still another study underscores the popular support for local control of curriculum decisions. A Gallup Poll (PDK 1980) question was:

> ...who should have the greatest influence in deciding what is taught in the public schools here--the federal government, the state government, or the local school board?

The responses to this question of who should decide what is taught in the schools were as follows:

9% said the federal government should decide.

15% said the state government should decide.

68% said the local school board should decide.

8% said don't know.

Part III: School Boards, Other Governments and the Legislative Process

In virtually every state capitol across the nation, legislatures are taking an increasingly active role in education issues. This trend, and some of the reasons behind it, is summarized well by one writer (Pipko, 1980):

> "State legislatures are writing more legislation to deal with the day-to-day operation of schools; legislators say the events of the last decade have forced them into this position. They cite single-interest lobbying groups; federal legislation dealing with due process, equal education opportunity, and the rights of minorities and women; the collective bargaining process; and school finance court cases and constitutional amendments as reasons..."

Not only are legislatures writing more legislation, but also they are writing it in more specific terms to make clear the intent of the legislation. As a result, the discretionary decision-making of local school districts, regarding how the law will be implemented, is eroding. Much recent legislation increasingly stipulates not only what will be done, but also how it will be done. Increasingly, actual school board policies and administrative procedures are molded after prescriptive legislation and regulations issued by state education agencies. Increasingly, local school district compliance with legislation, regulations and court decisions is expected without particular regard to the impact or quality of implementation of these policies.

There appear to be several very important consequences of this trend toward greater regulation for school boards.

- School boards are perceived as less representative by members of local communities. Since the boards' discretionary decision-making powers are eroding, and since board policies increasingly must reflect laws, regulations and court decisions, local influence upon boards' decision-making processes is diminished.

- Incumbents in school board elections are finding it more difficult to gain reelection. Recall elections have increased in those states which provide for them. Since the broad public is not aware of the erosion of boards' discretionary powers, public frustration has increased. School board elections are one way in which the public expresses its frustration.

- Because many of the recent regulations are in the area of equity of treatment (of women, minorities, handicapped students), in the area of labor practices (collective bargaining, due process), and school finance, school board attention is diverted away from other important areas, such as the educational program.

One recent study (NSBA, 1978) illustrated this trend clearly. Newly elected school board members were asked to compare and contrast their expectations for school board activity before their election with the reality after being elected. Here are the results:

Expectations Before Being Elected	Realities After Being Elected
o Curriculum decisions	o Collective bargaining
o School exenditures	o School expenditures
o Hiring teachers	o New school buildings

Other Governments

The increasing legislation, regulation and court involvement have come about largely because more interest groups and governmental bodies have expressed a concern for education, in particular, the purposes, performance and practices of the public schools. Many of these have sought redress for their grievances and concerns through political and legal channels, rather than through their local school board.

Because of the involvement of the "other governments" in education, many educational policies are no longer solely the prerogative of school boards. Indeed, as one observer (Lovell, 1979) points out:

> "Policy is no longer made mostly by a single governmental unit but is hammered out through a negotiating, bargaining relationship among multiple governing units. Policies are continually altered and implemented in the inter-jurisdictional milieu."

An implication for school boards of this description of the policy making climate is to stay informed and in constant communication with the "other governments" which have responsibility, jurisdiction or concern in the policy area under consideration. School boards have a special interest in shaping these policies since they will ultimately be responsible for their implementation. Policy makers in the "other governments" need to understand the unique local situation and circumstances while formulating policies which will impact local schools. School board members can and should play the role of diplomat, ambassador and representative of local school government to the "other governments" concerned with public education. Some of the areas for collaborative policy making are: long-range land use planning, health care delivery, transportation planning, energy development, recreational development, and adult and continuing education.

Legislative Involvement

One area of particular need of collaborative involvement from school boards is the legislative process. This is true for severasl reasons:

- Legislatures are becoming increasingly involved with education problems, ranging from finance and curriculum to collective bargaining.
- If policies are to be locally accepted and workable, legislators need to understand local impact of various legislative proposals before adopting particular policies.
- Legislatures are increasingly using a top down, prescriptive approach to implementing policies when other approaches may be more effective.
- In the eyes of legislators, school board members may well be more credible ambassadors of local schools than professional educators.

The growing awareness about the importance of the legislative process in determining critical educational policies has prompted school board members and their state and national associations to get involved in politics. For example, recently, the National School Boards Association moved its offices from Evanston, Illinois to Washington, D. C. specifically in order to intensify the school board presence on the national political scene. The top priority of every state school boards association across the country is legislative involvement. Many state associations in recent years have hired professional staff lobbyists to represent association positions during state legislative sessions.

In addition to active involvement in their state and national association legislative programs, school board members can initiate and/or support other kinds of activities which have influence upon legislators. Among these are:

- Involvement in election of legislators
- Establishing and maintaining communication with legislators
- Mobilizing community sentiment and communication with their legislators
- Engaging in lobbying activities
- Providing testimony before legislative committees

TOWARD NEW COALITIONS FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION*

Looking ahead, it is easy to become increasingly pessimistic about public support for the common schools. Major signs, especially continuing inflation, current tax revolts at the state and local level, an aging population, and an increased interest in voucher schemes and federal tuition tax credits all point to a re-privatization of educational services and to fewer public resources for education generally.

The logical result of these trends is unsettling, to say the least. At the end of this road may well be ghetto-ized schools for the urban poor, non-English-language schools for Hispanics, racially pure schools for the bigoted, religious schools for the devout, and for the well-off, a wholesale reversion to the private academies of the 19th century. It is difficult to see how any coherent value consensus in the society at large could possibly survive such fragmentation of educational programs, institutions, and support systems.

These dismal scenarios are, of course, not inevitable. But if the proschool coalitions of the recent past are dissolving, are there signs that new and reasonably broad-based coalitions are in the making? If not, are there indications of emerging precoalition forces or concepts that might in the near future catch the imagination and the allegiance of diverse interests? In short, are there harbingers of a positive "second transformation of the school" that might give hope to those who now see their basic educational faith under impossible strain?

There are tantalizing hints that new coalitions are possible and might well be catalyzed by unfolding social and economic realities. There is much we do not know and cannot know about the remainder of this troubled century, but there is much that can be surmised with varying degrees of probability.

First, current demographic patterns and projections assure in many parts of the nation an increase in elementary-school enrollment by 1984. With this will come an increase in the number of adults concerned with the condition and quality of schools.

Second, the greater number of families in which both parents work will exert additional pressure on the community, including the schools, to provide surrogate homes for children that provide both safe and constructive environments. The awakened interest of working parents in day-care centers is evidence of the need for such surrogate homes. The custodial functions of schools may well receive a new burst of parental attention and interest in the years ahead.

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*By Stephen K. Bailey, in Education Week, October 12, 1981

Third, in an unsettled, but inflationary, economic climate, tax credits sufficient to induce a substantial number of parents to transfer their children to private schools may be too costly for a federal budget already under severe stain. Further, voucher proposals may well turn out in practice to present grotesque administrative problems. The potential negative consequences of these experiments may ultimately induce people to stop looking for escape mechanisms and instead to coalesce to improve the common schools. Failing this, the public system in sheer self-defense may have to develop some as yet unforeseeable coalitions with tuition-tax credit and voucher proponents to claim an essential part of a diminishing pie.

Fourth, wholesale tax-and-spending reduction movements like those in California and Massachusetts can be carried only so far. As the public becomes increasingly aware of what a substantial loss of public services can do to the quality of life, steps will inevitably be taken to increase expenditures for necessary public functions, including education. For example, one of the most successful examples of collective action by pro-education forces at the state level during the past few years has been the "Tuesday Night Group" in California. In many respects, T.N.G. is a state counterpart to the Committee for Full Funding at the national level. "Comprised primarily of old-line education groups and big-city districts, the T.N.G. focuses on fiscal issues and eschews substantive matters that would inevitably lead to conflict," according to the researchers Michael W. Kirst and Stephen A. Somers. T.N.G. is credited with minimizing the predicted dire impact of Proposition 13 on the schools.

Fifth, economic necessity may drive the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association together. They have frequently worked together on specific legislative issues at both the state and federal level. In the recent political history of states and the federal government, both have demonstrated the power of organization in influencing elections and determining public policy. Both N.E.A. and A.F.T. have suffered from divisiveness and from a growing alienation between teachers on the one side and potential friends on the other. If they can find other areas of cooperation and can work together on cultivating public support, they can become energizing forces in the development of local, state, regional, and national coalitions whose major purpose is the improvement of the condition and quality of American education.

Sixth, American business and industry have a vital stake in the health of American education.

The industrial retraining of high-school dropouts or graduates is an expensive proposition. Poor schooling may be an important aspect of the nation's decline in economic productivity. As this connection becomes manifest, the business community may well increase its attention to schooling. In February 1981 a group of the top companies in California joined with educational leaders to discuss the plight of public education. Such conferences may well spring up in other regions of the country in the months and years ahead.

Seventh, the increasing number of minorities (specifically black and Hispanic), their desire to move into the mainstream of middle-class American life, and their growing political sophistication may well--at least in certain areas of the country--become major forces in inducing political leaders to increase the resources available for education. Over the next decade the proportion of school-age blacks and Hispanics to whites at the same age level will increase dramatically.

Eighth, the movement to establish and enforce minimum-competency requirements for high-school graduation in the late 1970's--although simplistic in some ways--is evidence of a growing public concern with the educational outcomes of our schools. This movement is ongoing.

Ninth, a number of foundations, professional associations, and professional scholars are at present conducting studies about elementary and secondary education--possibly indicating the beginning of a new commitment to educational improvement.

Finally, there are a large number of educational officials at all levels of government who are deeply involved in educational problems and who have direct lines of communication to top policymakers in both the legislative and executive branches of the government. These officials are, of course, subject to the policy directives set by these popularly elected executives and lawmakers. But they and the myriad professional and interest-group associations that work intimately with them are now major forces in the society.

More than dependent variables, they are initiators and monitors of policies and programs. They and their legislative allies (including legislative staff) are important parts of the policy infrastructure of modern governance. Their personal and professional status is associated with the general fate of education in the nation. They are consistently available as potential partners in new coalitions in support of schools.

Whether these various signs and forces will in fact add up to new coalitions of support for schools (and, if so, which schools), only the future can tell. Contrary indications preclude optimism. On the other hand, there are sufficient signs of an overarching and growing public concern about the state of the nation generally to suggest at least the possibility that education may once again be viewed as a major long-range instrument of national security, economic growth, and social stability.

For example, the state of the voluntary armed services and their inability to attract personnel able to handle complex machines of modern warfare are realities that will not soon go away and that have direct implications for educational policy. That the Soviet Union is evidently far more rigorous than the United States in insisting on advanced work in science and math as a secondary school requirement has become a topic of discussion at the highest levels of the American government.

On the economic front, the Japanese are outproducing the United States in part because Japan requires that its pupils spend longer hours in school and do more advanced work in math and technology-related subjects than American students. Michael Kirst reports that "Japanese children work much harder on difficult academic tasks than their American counterparts. Japanese children attend school about 225 days (each year) while California children are in school 180 days." If appropriate links can be proved between a better education and technological prowess, schools in this country may well receive a new burst of attention. How long it will take the nation's top leadership to see education once again as a key investment in America's future, no one can tell. But it would be strange indeed if some rising politicians in the next decade, recognizing the instrumental effect of education for the nation as a whole and its patent relationship to the broad national interest, did not begin the process of coalition-building toward greater public support for education.

A similar tendency could well develop at the state and local level, as interstate and regional competition develop to attract new industry to particular locations. A well-trained and highly educated population is a major asset in attracting new industry and new services to any geographic area.

Growing social pathologies in the nation--crime, divorce, drug abuse, urban ghettos, racial and ethnic conflict--prompt the search for solutions. The need to rescue education may, in the light of such pressing social problems, seem slight, but it is oftentimes the only source of long-range hope. Thus, in addition to specific factors that might stimulate the formation of pro-education coalitions in various places and among various groups around the country, there are, in fact, nationwide concerns that might well refocus public policy on the importance of improving educational services.

It seems clear, however, that whatever coalitions of support for schools are formed in the years ahead, the context of coalition-building will differ markedly from the past.

Demography will not be a tail wind but a head wind. Many groups and interests will be searching for re-privatization of education and will avoid political coalitions devoted to public-school issues only. Furthermore, with the projected diminuition of federal control, increased authority will be returned to the states. And with decremental budgets the rule, state coalitions will have their work cut out for them. In many cases they will compete with other states and municipal services also faced with punitive fiscal constraints.

In some states, such as New York, there are signs that the governor and state legislature are becoming increasingly preoccupied with <u>total</u> state aid to localities, and are thus increasingly reluctant to mediate among contending local claimants. Carried to its logical extreme, this trend would make educational coalition-building a largely local and bruising activity.

Perhaps most unsettling of all, new coalitions will have to deal with the searing political problem of how to form coalitions around imprecise, multiple, and often competing educational goals--for the central dream of perpetual social progress and individual fulfillment that once informed the great educational coalitions of the past, and the idea of a common school that would give everyone an equal chance, are no longer predominant features of America's ideological landscape. A 1980 Gallup poll suggests that the decline in the rating given to public schools has come to a halt, and that public schools are now held in high regard relative to other public institutions. But there is little evidence of a clear vision of the functions and purposes of public schooling, and there are increasing signs that small and local minorities wish to dominate school curricula and materials. Current battles over sex education, environmental education, tuition tax credits, creationist versus evolutionary theories, bilingualism, busing, mainstreaming for the handicapped--to name a few contentious issues--suggest that single-issue politics has also hit the schools. "Basic skills" seems to be the only center of real agreement, and even here there are enormous differences about what these words really mean.

Some recent attempts to make broad-based national political coalitions for public education fly have either not gotten off the runway (i.e., the N.E.A.-sponsored National Trust for the Public Schools) or have taken off solely to shoot something else down.

The National Coalition for Public Education (formerly the National Coalition to Save Public Education) has a substantial membership from liberal and labor organizations, but it has solely concentrated on defeating tuition-tax-credit legislation. Furthermore, its "lib-lab" composition has tended to deprive it of the kind of support from business, industry, agriculture, the news media, and prestigious professions that were so prominent an aspect of the White House Conference on Education in 1955. N.C.P.E. can perhaps extend its membership base in the years ahead, but it will have to transcend its present negative crusade and find points of ideological linkage with those concerned with the relationship of education to larger issues of American culture, prosperity, and security.

In the immediate future, premature attempts to form large-scale educational coalitions will certainly fail.

Such coalitions may have to be preceded by far less formal colloquies of concern--colloquies involving a diverse assembly of groups with quite varying intermediate agendas, but that share anxieties about the consequences of an unredeemed educational system and an underfunded public sector generally.

One thing is clear. The builders of new pro-school coalitions must be more than journeyman politicians responding to majority pressures. They must be artisans--perhaps artists--who can see education's place in the national tapestry, and who can weave local and parochial interest, as well as the nation's golden (if tattered) thread of noblesse oblige, into an original and compelling grand design.

THE POLITICS OF BOARDSMANSHIP: A PANEL DISCUSSION

The following comments were given by board members, a superintendent and a legislator in a panel discussion at the 1980 Oregon School Boards Association Convention.

Local Board Member #1

If you'll read a Webster's Dictionary, its definition of a politician is "one who is versed in the art and science of government; especially, one actively engaged in the business of government." Now, by statute, we are a governmental unit, and we are engaged in conducting the business of government, so by Webster's definition, we really are politicians.

Actually, if you stop and think of school boards, we are probably one of the few units of government at the polling place once a year. While we do not ourselves run every year, our record is voted on every year, because one of things that we do, in addition to the many issues of policy and finance that go on in the school board, is to adopt the budget every year. Then we have to get busy and submit it to the people, the voters, to vote on that portion which is our tax levy.

That makes us unique. There are few city governments that do have to go to the polling place every year, but school boards as a general rule have to go back to the polling place yearly. That can't help but make a politician out of you, because you have to answer to your taxpayers each year and they get a chance to vote on your record.

One of the questions we need to address is what can board members do to be involved in the legislative process. Because there are so many laws mandated by our State Legislature and by the Federal Government, and also so many restricting rules and regulations from our State Department of Education and the Federal Department of Education, it is incumbent upon us to keep up with what's going on in the political arena. To be knowledgeable it takes a little work to find out the reason for the issue and some credible way of resolving that issue. I want to say that from the standpoint of the legislative process, I think we have a very fine system in the State of Oregon and in our School Board Association. We do have a legislative network made up of people from all over the state, and we meet four times a year to hammer out those issues that will be coming before the next session of the legislature. Of course, there are different opinions, and we are able to get those hammered out in advance, and then when we go to Salem, we are able to present a united front.

Individually we can be a great help to our legislators because we can give our local perspective on the issues when the legislator calls us and brings to our attention an item of importance.

One thing that I think is extremely important in our work as lobbyists, you may say, is to be completely well informed and not ask for those things that would not be credible or would not be economically feasible. For that reason, I think that we do ourselves a service to be thoroughly informed on issues on which we are about to approach our legislators.

We were asked to comment on effective and ineffective political involvement. I think it is ineffective not to be informed on the issues. I think another way that we can sometimes hurt ourselves is if we fall into the trap of being one issue oriented, because we don't see both sides of the question. I think we should be interested in all of the issues that affect our schools.

There are several local, state and national trends that require our political involvement. I think all of us are well aware of the recent handicapped legislation. One of the items right now that is going to be with us more and more is English as a Second Language. We're fighting the Lau versus Nichols regulations that are coming through our Federal Department of Education. I think these are going to be issues that we have to watch very carefully. An article that I read recently about education said that if we didn't watch out, our actions will simply be like moving deck chairs around on the Titanic.

What should boards and board members do to become involved in politics? My answer is that I cannot see how you can possibly avoid it. I think that the very nature of what we are--elected to represent the people and we have to answer to them; we have to be involved at the state and national levels with all its effects--I just don't see how we can separate the two.

Local Superintendent

I certainly concur with the remarks made about the fact that the board member is, or better be, a politician. It reminds me of one person in our great neighbor to the south, a consummate politician in some past decade, Jess Unruh, who was a Speaker of the California Assembly. One statement he made I thought sums it up. He said, "It sometimes is necessary to rise above principle to pure politics." I think some people could look at that cynically, but actually there is a great deal of truth there. I think that when we think of the word politician, too often we think of the Richard Nixons or Richard Daleys. . .somehow, it's just a bit sinister. Yet, one of the most beloved presidents in our history, a person that is always in anybody's list of the three best presidents of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, was probably the consummate politician when it came to accomplishing the goals and winning over the challenge that he faced. If our society is to work, in the way this society is organized, the people who are in positions of responsibililty must be politicians. They must make it work. So I define a politician as a person effective in getting it done, in making the government work at whatever level the person happens to be involved. The school board certainly is involved in the business of government of the local school district.

I think that a board member is a politican in three or four ways. First would be in the use of power. There are some legally defined powers which school boards have; and when fulfilling those particular powers, a board member has no official power unless the board is in a formal session. The board member acting individually, as we know, does not have any power, legally defined, and exercises that power through voting only when the board is sitting in an official meeting. The board as a whole has power. The individual does not, in that sense.

But that's too narrow. If we define power as the ability to influence a course of action for the good of the district and to make it effective, a board member has a great deal of informal power--the influence with other board members, with the community, and with staff members.

I think one of the ways in which board members must function, in addition to sitting responsibly, becoming informed, all of the things that we've mentioned earlier, is in knowing that fine line as to when to compromise, when to work with other people. In a pluralistic society such as we have--pluralistic in an ethnic sense, but in an opinion sense as well, with a wide range on the opinion spectrum in any community--most of the decisions that are made in school districts do not involve a moral stance. That is, most of them are pragmatic in orientation. What is the best way to accomplish a particular goal? This is fortunate, because it does mean that people can have different views about an approach without being caught in a position of "I am morally right; you are morally wrong." It is a lot easier to work toward the compromise or toward a mutually acceptable solution when we say, "O.K., we both want the same thing, we are both morally right, but I think my way of doing it is a bit better than yours, or you may think your way of doing it is a bit better than mine," then to reach a concensus and move. I think one of the biggest dangers we have is when we equate a pragmatic approach with a moral stance, make a moral issue out of something that we should not. As one Methodist Bishop I heard say, "One of the troubles is that too many people in life major in minors," that is, make big things out of things that are not necessarily big. I think that the art of knowing when to compromise, and to do so without giving up a matter of principle is one of the things that a board member does need to know and be able to work with in order to be an effective politician.

With that goes the communication with our public. Board members are the elected board of directors of the stockholders, namely the public, that own the institution. They're there to represent the institution, and that involves two aspects. One is to try to find out what it is that the electorate does want, what the community wants, and to hopefully try to fulfill it, yet, at the same time, to be able and willing and know when it is appropriate to substitute his or her own judgment, even for the majority of the supporters if necessary, because a person is elected to the board to use his or her judgment. I think that any board is going to have a lot of pressure put on it and a lot of people trying to exercise influence on it. That is in the best democratic tradition of this society. We have to be open to have people address the board and to

bring pressure if they will. My own definition of the place to draw the line is to take the stand always that we're open to new ideas; we're open to being persuaded that somebody else has a better idea. If anybody can present a better case, give every opportunity to do so, and then yield on it. We shouldn't have so much pride of authorship that we can't yield on something if somebody shows us a better way of doing it. But if we are not convinced that there is a better way, and we think there is a strong reason to follow a particular course of action, then have the strength to say "no" in the face of pressure. If, after we have heard from everybody, we still think this is the route to go, I think a board member, acting as a politician again, must know when to exercise this strength to say, "No, in this instance, I am better informed; my judgment is going to be what I have to follow." Many issues will fall on both sides of that kind of spectrum. I think that communication is a crucial part of a board member's effectiveness as a politician. A communicator knows where the community is, whether we're always following the mandate or the desires of a particular group. We have to know where our community is so that we can anticipate what kinds of problems we are going to have if we try to pursue a particular course of action.

The third way in which I think a board member exercises a legitimate political role is in lending his or her personal credibility to the school district's effort. Board members have a very high credibility in the community--you wouldn't have been elected to that office if you didn't. I think the credibility which the elected lay representatives have in helping to sell the course of action that is being determined by the district back to the community is far superior to the superintendent's credibility, or the credibility of the professional staff members. We are viewed, regardless of how enlightened the programs are, or our ideas are, as having a certain self interest. Although a professional administrator should have credibility in the community to be generally believable, we're still perceived just a bit more on the self interest side. Board members who have been elected do not carry quite that much baggage, and I think when the board members stand with the program and help support it in the community, it does strengthen the credibility of that program with the community. I think that is an important political function of board members.

Outside of the community, before the Legislature, I have personally been impressed with the closeness, the openness with which the state level of government operates in Oregon. I have had the experience of testifying before committees, always very respectfully treated even though our advice is not necessarily followed. That is built right in to the Oregon character, that we do have access to our elected officials whether they be at the State Legislature or, you as board members at the local level. Using that kind of influence from the local district to the state level of government (whether it be the State Board of Education, the Legislature, or other decision-making bodies at the state level) is an important political aspect of the local board member's role. Board members are taken extremely seriously when they are testifying before state bodies as well as when they are testifying locally.

To sum up, I think that when you are operating effectively as a politician, there is nothing sinister about that. You simply are working to be effective personally as a board member in affecting decisions in your own community, affecting decisions on your own board. When you are working to help the board be effective, then you're working to help make the district effective in the common task which ultimately, is providing the young men and young women of Oregon the best possible education.

Local Board Member #2

Probably a lot of what I am going to say may have been touched on already, although I will be a little more specific in some areas. Obviously, as has been mentioned, we all had to be elected at one point, and we are therefore politicians in working to win that election. The role we play on the board must involve compromise. I think that any of you who have served any length of time on a board have undoubtedly been through that--the situations where you are not going to prevail on a particular point--and perhaps sometimes you agree to go with somebody else because you want to get their vote later on. I think that's a part of the political process. It's a little bit cynical perhaps, but I don't think you can realistically govern a school district always upon your principled position, because in too many cases you'll never get anything achieved.

I think that on the other hand as a politician, there are times when you will be forced to "play for position" as it were. You may well want (or need to be) a champion of a particular cause. You may be able to do it without affecting your position vis a vis the other board members at all. Sometimes it's something that you are doing for a reason totally outside the school board role, a personal conviction or commitment. "Playing for position" can also arise in the the situation where pressure groups are coming to the board, demanding something. They have to be given a little something. Often it is just a decent hearing or a little bit of time. All of the board members may know that there is no way you are ever going to give that group what they're demanding. But you cannot tell them that up front, sending them away mad, because they are going to come back to vote on your budget next year, vote on your tax base, vote on your bond issue. And that's a very political role. You are playing for position. Is that an unfair way to treat them? I don't think so. You have to respond to people. You have to deal with them; they have to go away feeling that at least they've been listened to. Sometimes you have to spend more time, or maybe you have to investigate a particular point. It's at times a difficult role, but I think that it's an important part of the political process. You are never going to have everybody on your side. When you're dealing with the public function of running a school district, you must do so without obviously alienating voters.

Why should we be involved in the political process? A very obvious reason is budgeting. For everything, we have to go to the people, whether it is for your annual levies, or tax bases, or bond issues. We have to be political because the people have to be sold on education today. We have the circumstance that in our own district every year when we look through the data, we see the results of elections from years past; and up to the mid 60s, the budget was approved the first time. Since then, we vote two, three, four times a year. People have to be sold on education today. Part of it, I think, is a society-wide disillusionment with government; but it's a fact that you must convince the people that what you are doing is right, and we are spending money wisely. That's a political job--to sell the people on what we're doing.

The selling of people on education also entails for most of us the fact that our citizenry is changing. You don't have a population that is purely the local folk who grew up there. You are having people moving in and out. We're only 25 miles north of the California border, so we have a lot of people who leave California. They have no children here--their children are grown; perhaps they moved to California from somewhere else even, and they have no ties to the school. A superintendent from another district spoke to us two or three years ago when many of us were having a real problem passing budget levies. That district has a high senior citizen population--people that just have no connection with the schools. They had to get politically involved to pass their levies. The board did go out and involve those people. They told them about the schools, they brought them in, and they made them learn about them. I think that that's something that you can't take for granted--that people coming into your community are going to learn about and know about your schools. Far too many of them have no children who'll ever attend those schools, so you must go out and show them.

Legislative involvement has been mentioned. Obviously, that's a significant problem. Every year you deal with new and wonderful things that come from Salem, Washington, sometimes from the county governments, and that's a purely political process. The legislative process is critical to us, since funding is not simply at the local level--it also involves state and federal levels--so we must be involved with the State Legislature, and it's important to have some input at the federal level as well. That's part of running a local school district--being involved in state and national funding processes.

We were asked to identify effective and ineffective political involvement by board members. We have the effect of the OEA and the NEA's involvement in the legislative process that is forcing board members to be politically active. Two years ago the OEA trumpeted that 64 of 76 people they supported were elected in the State Legislature and Senate. Now, perhaps school board members would have supported an equally large number. What that meant, though, was that OEA was giving money to these 64 people who won. They weren't the sole contributors, but obviously, when they're playing that kind of a significant role in getting people sent to Salem and nationally (they are one of the two or three largest

lobbying groups today), as board members we must become involved in electing people. I think that the formation of the Federal Department of Education is an effective result of school members (maybe ineffective at the same time because many people feel that that is purely an NEA-created entity). The National School Boards Association worked very hard for formation of the Department as well. I think that an example of where school board members can be effective was the sustaining of the governor's veto of a Senate Bill last year, which would have greatly opened up the collective bargaining process. At the same time the number of collective bargaining statutes that we've had represents a case where board members were ineffective. We were not able to sway the Legislature so that they gave us greater power. We keep trying every year, but obviously that's an area where we are not being as effective. On the local level, many of you may have been involved in the past years with the EDA funding of public works grants. In our own district we were effective in a purely political process. Those were administered by cities or counties. In round two, school districts could qualify. Our district had to make an effort by appearing at the City Council, by threatening to go to the Regional Offices in Seattle--in effect to force our city to approve a portion of the funding for the local school district. It was a case of one entity versus another, but we were fortunate to get some funds from that. Ballot Measure 6, just recently defeated, I think is an example of, again, school board members being effective in getting things done in the political process.

How do you get involved in politics outside the school board? Many of you are probably involved in legislative campaigns. I think it is important that you get to know those local representatives. Sometimes you have to deal with people that you don't really like, but you have to make the effort to keep them informed of what you're doing. You have to ask them to contact you when matters affecting education are before them. Volunteer to help when you can do so. You know that OEA is going to help legislators. I think we have to do it as well. You have to let the legislators know that you will tell them about an issue so that they can have some feel for the local situation. For example, our district was fortunate enough this week to pass a major bond issue, and we got that done with a purely political campaign--committees, brochures, door to door, the whole route. That's just what a bond issue is all about; it's a political process.

I think that in the long run we are going to be more and more involved in dealing with these other governments, and that heightens the political role we have to play. A part of our bond issue will be to build another high school. We have to get some property annexed to the city, so we have to know who is going to be on the City Council. You find yourself in so many areas today having to deal with other governments in land use. Five years ago we were asked by the County to comment on subdivision, and we told them, "We don't care; you put subdivisions in; we build schools as we need to." That's what we saw our role in land use to be. After the Attorney General rendered an opinion that planning

bodies had to include planning for schools, we finally said, "O.K., you're right; we have to be involved in land use by telling people whether it's good, bad, or indifferent as to location of subdivisions and other improvements."

Being on a school board in years past may have been an easy spot and you were above politics. You aren't today; we're in it all the way.

State Legislator

I've just come off a successful campaign in which I was challenged by a teacher--Past President of the National Education Association--one who is still a member of the State Board of Directors of the OEA. She had the full force of the OEA behind her. So, if my remarks are somehow tempered and somewhat biased, you'll understand that I intend to provide you with the perspective from that side. So be it.

I also just finished knocking on about 4,000 doors in my district, something that not too many school board members do, but I feel that's a very important technique. It really puts you in touch with the people, particularly when you're an incumbent. You hear a lot of gripes. It isn't just a matter of going from door to door, but frequently I get asked inside to hear what the people have on their minds. They've got a lot on their minds about education, and I'll touch on that in a few moments.

School board members are politicians in a number of ways--you're listeners, you're communicators, and this is a two-way communication. Not only do you listen to your constituents and what they're communicating to you, but also your job is communicating back to them what is going on in your schools, what policies you're considering--in a sense molding opinion out in your community and gathering support for those policy decisions that you're making as a board. You're compromisers. You compromise, not on principles, but you learn to compromise the means to an end; that's the way we get things done. Compromise sometimes carries a bad connotation. At one point during the campaign in a debate that my opponent and I were having, we were asked about how we view the word "compromise," and I was quick to point out that is not a compromise of principle. I don't think that we should ever compromise our principles, but there is always room for compromise and the means to reach that end. You're policy makers, and that's what a politician is. You are articulators. You have to relate your policies and your intent, as I said before, in a two-way communication.

But let me focus myself on one thing that I don't think has been focused on up to this point, and that is that you are representatives. You're elected; you represent the people who have elected you to your board positions. You also represent back to those people your education process and your policy. One of the things I found at the doors when people would talk about education is that they felt that too frequently school boards are just the puppets of, and spokespersons for, the

administration. I think you've got a problem there, and you've got a job and a challenge ahead of you, because you have to communicate with those people that you do represent them as well. So if there is one direction of emphasis in your work as school board members, I think that is in improving your communication--your individual communication--with your community.

Why political involvement? Well, again I am going to touch on something that has been mentioned, but not in the detail that I am going to discuss here. The first thing I wrote down--the best reason for political involvement--is the opposition. There is opposition out there, not only in the community, but also the OEA and the NEA are extremely powerful forces in education today. Let me tell you how OEA gets involved in campaigns. Most special interest groups will have a lobbyist or a representative who will contact legislators and candidates, telling them what the aims and the principles of the organization are. They may offer a contribution, answer questions, and maybe even offer to recruit some volunteers that belong to their organizations, and that's it.

OEA gets involved totally--they run campaign schools for the people that they're running, they provide heavy finances, they provide volunteers. Believe me, teachers vote probably on a better percentage level than any other group. They are totally involved. My opponent said time and again, particularly as we spoke before teacher groups, "Teachers must get involved to be part of our own destinies." And in fact, they are well organized and well financed. In the 1978 general election, the Oregon Education Association spent the second highest amount of money in campaigns of any lobby group in the state of Oregon. They've turned, I feel, from being an education association and really lobbying for a broad range of education interests, to being one of single purpose, and that is lobbying for and promoting teachers' employment conditions and rights.

After this last legislative session, I talked to a lot of people in the education community trying to get a feel as to what programs OEA was promoting and what programs OSBA and COSA (Confederation of School Administrators) were promoting. It was pretty uniform among those who were coming from the school board/management side, but when it came to lobbying for kids' issues and programs, when it came to lobbying for the broader community interests, the lobbyist for OEA said to the lobbyists for COSA and OSBA, "You fellows do it," and they did it. When it came to lobbying for strictly teacher management issues, employment relations and collective bargaining, that's where you saw OEA. And so I think that, unfortunately, they've narrowed their focus. That makes it even more important that you do the job because you're perhaps not going to get the help on those issues that we had some time ago.

They're aggressive in seeking aims in the legislature that they couldn't get and cannot get at the bargaining table--fair dismissal for probationary teachers, reduction in retirement age without actuarial loss, and various terms into the mandatory bargaining and out of the permissive bargaining areas. And they will be back asking for these

things because they have not been able to get them at the bargaining table. You are necessary in this process, and it's absolutely necessary that more of you get involved and that you bring your communities in with you in order to simply present the alternative points of view and to provide a balance in the minds of the legislators. On those issues in which we and the teachers agree, it can simply double the emphasis there. I think that you've got a role here, and I just want to tell you the other side is way ahead of you right now.

I'm now going to talk about how you can do an effective job of lobbying. First, know your stuff, know your facts, that's of critical importance. Know your legislators; know what they know and what they do not know; know their backgrounds; know where they're coming from. Have absolute candor and absolute honesty. There's nothing worse you can do in the Oregon legislative process--and you only have to do it once and you're lost forever--that is, if you ever mislead somebody. You can be mistaken and you can correct your mistakes, but if you ever tell somebody one thing and they find out "it ain't so," then you've lost them. I want to emphasize how important it is to meet with and get on a first name basis with your legislators, and now in the off season is the time to do it. Don't wait until the session begins. In our county we are going to be having a dinner with the recently elected and reelected legislators, school superintendents and board members. If I can add another jab here, I get tired of going to those dinners and sitting down only with school superintendents. I'd like to see more board members at those meetings. We are lucky if we maybe get the chairmen from the boards. We really don't get broad participation. I feel it's important that we get the perspective and we get frank discussion not only between ourselves and our administrators, but also between ourselves and you as elected representatives. I think we have a lot of empathy and a lot in common by the very fact we are elected.

I suggest you prepare a fact book about your school district or districts. It would contain a lot of information: school population, makeup of the population, teachers, and budgets. This is given each session to the legislators. It's nice when you are considering legislation to be able to relate specifically back to your own community. And that leads into this matter of <u>issues</u>. When you want to relate your positions on the issues to your legislators, the fact book helps to identify specifically with the issue, organize your presentation--whether it's in writing, orally, or as a group. Sometimes it helps you to provide a brief background, and it's particularly important to relate back to your local situation. I cannot over emphasize how important it is to relate things back home, because while I'm concerned about education in the state , I can sure relate a lot better if you can tell me how it is and how things will be affected.

Try to make your arguments rational, logical and ordered. Don't be threatening. Nothing turns me off more than a lobbyist who comes in and threatens me. The professional lobbyist knows his business--knows not to do that, and we have no problem. But we run into problems with some single interest lobbyists, some citizen lobbyists who have a single interest in mind. They come in and they say, "You better listen to me. Folks back in the district are saying this, and if you don't vote this way we'll go out and work against you," and so forth. Well, human nature being what it is--you back me into a corner, my back is going to get stiff and my ears are suddenly going to get wax in them, and you're not going to be effective. Finally, keep it simple. That's what they always say to politicans when we stand up on the floor and want to argue and debate, and go on and on. So try to keep your arguments fairly crisp and concise.

Earlier, I related the fact that while knocking on doors, I found that a lot of people were suspicious of boards, suspicious that they were simply in the hands of the administration, and these are the people that are putting the squeeze on finances. I think that we have a job to communicate back to these people that we are doing a job and to allay their fears and their suspicions. How would you answer a constituent who says to you, "I think our local district is top heavy in administrators," or "We don't need this program." How many of you know what kind of programs you have that people may consider frills? How long has it been since you looked at your own curriculum? These are kinds of things that I know the people out on the door steps are asking. It may behoove you sometime to go out there on a weekend, knock on a few doors, and ask them what they do think of education in your community. You may learn some things that will help you be better, more effective school board members, and better politicians in that sense.

To sum up on how you can be involved, I think I've touched on a number of things that you can do. You can work on your own school campaigns, whether they are budgets, bonds, issues, or board campaigns. You can get involved in legislative campaigns. You can contribute to CARE, which is the political action committee for the school boards and school administrators. I think more people should be contributing to that or making individual contributions. I mentioned meeting with your legislators in round-table discussions, and don't stay away from those. There are a lot of things that you could do--simply writing, petitioning, contacting, being involved; but do so, and don't leave it to the few, because I can only end by saying the other side is well organized. You'd better recognize that, and it just tells me that it's all the more important that you be involved, too.

HOW CAN ASSOCIATIONS BE EFFECTIVE IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY?*

Twenty-three years ago, at about the mid-point of my 6-year stint as the first, full-time public relations director of the Washington Education Association, I interviewed, over a 6-month period, school board members, PTA officers, lay advisory committee members, superintendents and teachers in more than 100 school districts to determine the factors that made special school levy and bond elections successful--or that conspired to produce failures.

I learned many things and found reinforcement for many others. I learned, for example, that the role of board members during a school campaign was the key to the campaign's outcome. If school board members took a hands-off policy, if its members showed little concern for the campaign's outcome, or if the board was publicly split in its support, 3 times out of 5 the school measure was rejected.

When the board worked behind the scenes with various community groups, 2 school measures passed for each 1 that failed.

School board leadership, I found, really produced results. When the bulk of leadership was shouldered by board members, when board members got out in front, publicly coordinating the efforts of others, speaking for the measure, raising funds for the campaign, arranging publicity, answering opponents and so on, chances for success increased to 3 times out of 4.

From this experience, I learned

- -- that few people will do the right thing without strong leadership;
- -- that broad school support requires direct and strong leadership;
- -- that united leaders produce more support than divided leadership;
- -- that elected board members have more credibility when they act together publicly in a strong community leadership role than any other person or group;
- -- that schools have more credibility (as their elected board members do)--and enjoy more public support--when citizens are told by board members what is expected of them, in order to have good schools, rather than when citizens are simply asked by board members what their schools can do for them.

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*Presented to the National Association of State School Boards Association Executives, Salishan, Oregon, August 11, 1976, by C. Mongomery Johnson. C. Montgomery Johnson has operated his own consulting firm since 1971. He has specialized in increasing the public support for public schools and community colleges, increasing the organizational effectiveness of voluntary associations and consulting in both ballot and candidate elections in six western states.

During this same early period in my career, as the legislative lobbyist for WEA and for the Allied School Forces (a confederation consisting of the State School Directors' Association, state education association, PTA, classified employees' association and the office of public instruction), I learned of the tragic ineffectiveness of the school directors in the state education family--mainly, it seemed, because school board members and their association spokespersons could not decide whether they were representatives of the problems of big districts or of small ones, representatives of what the constitutents in their respective districts said they wanted from their schools or didn't want from their annual property tax statements, . . .whether they were leaders of school public opinion or followers of it.

Following the six years as WEA's public relations director and lobbyist--while I was Washington manager of public affairs and lobbyist for the Weyerhaeuser Company, I also spent 6 years on the Vashon Island School Board. This little district "enjoyed" the lowest assessed valuation per child among the 40 or so school districts in our county, one of the lowest (that means worst) salary schedules for teachers and a very, very, modest (that means limited and that means poor) educational program.

During the first month we lived on the Island, we received a postcard Monday night before a Tuesday school levy election. The message was simple. It read: "Vote No against the school levy as a protest against your school board members." It was anonymously signed: "Your Concerned Neighbors." The levy was beaten--by about 2 to 1.

I learned many things, quickly, on Vashon Island

-- that as school boards go, and by State School Directors' Association standards, Vashon's board was pretty good;

-- that, while the Vashon board was made up of dedicated, strong-willed citizens, its members couldn't agree on what they really were supposed to do as board members;

-- that the public liked the individual board members (all had been re-elected at least once and several many times) but agreed that its school board members couldn't agree on what they <u>really</u> were doing as board members;

-- that people can believe that an organization's members are okay and still not have confidence, or just much faith, in the organization itself.

During the eight years I lobbied for Weyerhauser and for the Association of Washington Industries, I reinforced my six years lobbying-learning for education with further knowledge. I learned during this 14-year period that there are four basic elements that make up an effective lobbying effort for interest groups and associations:

First, the association must develop reliable data, information that will stand up when looked at by the liberal and the conservative, the highly sophisticated and the less so, by the association's friends and by its antagonists.

Second, the association must disseminate that information through the hands of credible representatives (lobbyists) whose word is good on both sides of the aisle.

Third, the association must develop a cohesive membership on whatever issues it deems important enough to take a position--members who are not expected to think alike, but who must act together.

And fourth, the association's members, statewide, must work at home, in their respective local communities, to stimulate the local constituency to respond to public officials, both year 'round and during legislative decision-making periods, saying the same things to these officials that their lobbyists are saying when they talk to the public officials.

Because of a short-fall on at least one or more of these four critical elements, I observed during this period of my activities why the State School Directors' Association was a miserable failure, relatively, in the public influence arena in my state.

Twelve yeas ago my "reward" for being one of the key persons in the successful election of Governor Dan Evans was to serve 3 consecutive 2-year terms as elected, but also full-time salaried, chairman of the G.O.P. state central committee. Here one must learn fast. For in this role there are only the quick or the dead.

During the 6-year period, in a state that is at best 3 parts Republican to 5 parts Democrat, I succeeded in work to re-elect a governor, re-elect a secretary of state, elect an attorney general and gain control of the state house of representatives in 3 successive elections. That latter trick had not been previously done in 40 years (nor since).

Particularly, during this period I learned, first hand,

-- that to be effective, you do not become bogged down with "managing" anything; you concentrate on "leading." Leaders are hard to come by. You can hire managers.

-- that if you wait for the people to tell you what they want, whether it be for schools or roads or whatever, you will hear often from the noisy and greedy ones and wait a lifetime to hear the majority.

-- that you will not be given power to act if you seek power for yourself; but you will have the power to act when your actions are perceived to be the actions of persons the public trusts.

-- that true power does not automatically stem from, nor accompany, elected personal position, party rule or even public law. Power (and that equates with effectiveness) flows from those who want something to persons whom those who want something trust, and that means to persons who are perceived as not wanting power for themselves but only for the public interest. It flows to persons who have communicated regularly, candidly and honestly with the public, continuously, year 'round. It flows to persons who, once having made a decision or commitment affecting the public, don't double-cross the public by changing that decision under pressure.

During this same period I learned

-- that you cannot be very effective without making waves, because (as the tug boat knows) if you're not making waves, you are standing still.

-- that you can be effective if you oppose nonsense, but you will not be successful if you oppose change.

-- that there is a clear distinction in the public's mind between popularity and respect. (Popularity will merely gain you public tolerance. Respect will earn you public approval.)

-- that you gain neither enemies nor allies when you set modest goals and take up relatively noncontroversial tasks. But, while you inevitably gain enemies when you set major goals and tackle controversial problems, you will also attract allies who make achievement of your goal possible.

Six years ago I retired from personal partisan politics to set up my own communications consulting business. We spend much time helping clients who range from school districts to statewide associations of school administrators, teachers, bankers, labor unions, community colleges and private corporations. We specialize in sampling community attitudes, increasing organizational effectiveness in governmental affairs, running election campaigns and in creating (or recreating) support for public education. In the the course of helping clients gain voter approval of about $575 millions in construction bonds and operating levies, and carrying out other efforts during this past 6 years, we have conducted some 25 to 30 local district and statewide attitude surveys. We have learned a lot about public opinion, voter behavior and school support.

We have learned

-- that not many people really know what local school boards do or are supposed to be doing.

-- that most people think school boards have somewhat more influence in local school district policies and programs than school administrators, but that parents have practically none.

-- that parents have a pretty good idea about what goes on in public schools on a day-to-day basis but practically no idea about what educational goals are.

-- that in any given district, on any given subject, more people feel they are less satisfactorily informed than satisfactorily informed.

-- that, overwhelmingly, the public feels teachers should be held more accountable for the educational progress of their students, and administrators should be held more accountable for the educational competency of teachers; but the public doesn't know who to hold accountable for these objectives because school boards tend to blame someone else when asked.

During the past six years I have also had reinforced much learning that has been persnally experienced over the past 30 years--learning about associations, association personnel and problems, associations of school persons, business persons, professional persons, associations of private corporations, lay citizens, public agencies, public corporations, public officials and of politicians. I have, repeatedly, learned

-- that associations or persons or groups of persons can be described and have characteristics nearly identical to individual persons . . .there are actors and there are reactors. . .associations that are extrovertish or introvertish. . .associations that are socially involved or act socially alienated. . .associations seemingly established to protect what the members already have, or established to serve better the general welfare. . .associations that try to keep bad things from happening or those who try to cause better things to happen.

-- that there are associations which, like political fanatics, are always adopting programs to redouble their efforts after losing sight of their objectives (if they ever had clearly defined objectives in the first place).

-- that too many associations which have worthy public missions have elected leaders and paid staff who seem more preoccupied with setting up or distributing politically palatable placebos to members than with devoting themselves to the more dangerous task of getting the association's mission accomplished.

-- that too many associations identify "enemies" rather than problems and set safe courses designed to cope with "the enemy" rather than sound goals designed to overcome the true problems standing in the way of their basic mission.

-- that too many associations which originally were established out of need to solve a grave injustice or satisfy an obvious social need today, have shifted their efforts to protecting a greater injustice or standing in the way of meeting social need because they seem unwilling or unable to adapt to a different set of circumstances than the ones in existence at their time of origin.

With this background, then, let's look at the five working words in our discussion question "How Can Associations Be Effective in a Pluralistic Society?"

(1) "Society" - For our purposes I suggest that "society" includes not only all people, collectively constituting a community of related, interdependent individuals but also all organizations of people constituting a community of related, interdependent associations of individuals that have personalities like individuals.

(2) "Pluralistic" - This is the theory, philosophically, that says reality is composed of a multiplicity of ultimate beings or principles or entities. For our purposes, it is the recognition that a "pluralistic" society consists not only of more than one kind of person (of which there are many near-duplicate copies) but also of more than one kind of association (which take on all the personality characteristics of individual persons and of which there are many near-duplicate copies of each). Accepting these "grounds," then, we can accept the premise that effective associations have many of the same qualities of effective persons, and ineffective associations suffer the same qualities and characteristics as ineffectual individuals.

(3) "Association" - To "associate" is to join in companionship or action, or to connect in thought. Associations in our pluralistic society function mainly on one or the other of these person-oriented premises: either that

a. Man is born perfect but has within the instruments of his own destruction (thus we must join together to protect ourselves from ourselves),

or

b. Man alone among the animals is created incomplete, but with the capacity to complete himself (and thus we must join together in the mission to raise man closer toward completeness).

An association of persons, and groups of persons, who have been elected to set the public policy and public programs authorized by the public to raise the level of the public's education, then, has one clear, over-riding mission. It is not to "manage" or "engineer" something. It is not to "control" or simply "oversee" something. It is to advocate education. . .not to be the apologists for education, or the rationalizers of education, but to be the public's organized, elected advocates for education.

(4) "Effective" - To advocate public education effectively, the adjectives "conclusively," "adequately," and "productively" are among the first that come to mind. The concepts "effective in relation to man's capacity to learn" and "effective in relation to our known ability for improving man's capacity to be better educated" are among the first that come to mind.

(5) "How" - "How to be effective?"

Someone has recently observed that "associations of school teachers are power-oriented; associations of school administrators are money-oriented; and associations of school board members are dis-oriented. . .only the public is education-oriented."

That's a hell of a thing to think up and a worse thing to laugh at. Unfortunately, there is just enough truth in the perception of that observation so that when you throw it against the barn, it sticks.

The inference in the observation, at least as I see it, is not that there is anything really wrong with teachers or their associations wanting power, or school administrators or their associations wanting more money for education or the public being deeply interested in public education. The bad inference is that school boards and their associations don't really have it together. Members aren't certain why they are on the local board. . .local boards aren't certain what their mission is. State associations aren't sure, from year to year, what they are going to program because they haven't figured out who is going to shoot at them or at education from which angle on which subject; or they haven't figured out what the next set of officers might want to do--or--you name it.

Until a comfortable majority of school board members, local school boards and state associations of boards, become genuine, clear-minded, like-minded, aggressive advocates for better public education, they'll continue to be by-passed by others who are, or who see in the organizational system of public education the means to accomplish some narrower or lesser goal.

School boards and their associations are something like a loaf of day-old bread. They don't make your mouth water, they aren't really good enough to keep, but they are not quite bad enough to throw out. But, like day-old bread, they sort of sit on the shelf, waiting for things to happen while they become less palatable as time passes.

A highly regarded school man recently observed that local school districts and local school boards are not obsolete, although some of their behavior may be.

So how to be effective?

Eric Hoffer, in his book The True Believer, observes, "If you would lead the people, you must first find where they are."

There is one truth more basic than that. . .if you would lead the people, you must first find where you are.

School boards' associations are the organizations of local board members and boards elected and authorized, not to run the schools, but to set policy and set programs and to see that local public schools are run effectively. Your members are the executors of the future. . .if they are not the advocates of public education, what then can they, or we, believe in?

They must know that--and believe that. Your association responsibility is to assure that.

It is not enough that boards' associations, local boards and individual members believe in more effective school management, or in local lay control of education, as contrasted with control by the teaching profession or some other level of government. It is not enough that you not believe in what others want of the school system, or not believe in what others would do in your roles if you were not there.

Public education and the system of locally controlled lay boards have largely relied on the moderately advantaged, middle class in America for support and for board personnel. But like the mistreated minorities in America today, this advantaged middle class (yes, and school boards and boards' associations) are also becoming alienated from our culture. . .blame the decline in our self-esteem, the success of modern science, the abandonment of religious faith, the proliferation of mass media and the means of communication. Blame whomever and whatever.

The road back from society's disassociation with school boards and boards' associations is through greater social involvement--both internally, within our associations, and externally, within our "pluralistic society."

Earlier, I pointed out that association effectiveness in the legislative process depends on (1) having reliable data, (2) presented and disseminated by credible spokespersons, (3) a cohesive association membership on issues, and (4) membership working within its respective communities to stimulate uniform community response to public officials, year 'round, on issues judged vital to the association's mission.

To achieve a cohesive membership (which is basic to your ability to be effective) you must first have involvement in your association's affairs. Not just attendance, but honest involvement.

To get involvement, you must set up something that attracts involvement.

To attract involvement, you must convince potential participants they'll benefit from involving themselves.

To convince potential participants they'll benefit, you've got to create a program in which participants feel they'll get more than they give. . .or at least as much.

To do that, your programs must be put together by people who are at least as innovative, disciplined, smart, aggressive and able communicators as the persons they seek to attract.

(In other words, if we were talking about an effective school, teachers would have to be better educated, more experienced and better communicators than the students; and if we are talking about an association, the professional staff and volunteer leadership must pull together people and programs that offer not just something different for the membership, but something better than what they've experienced elsewhere, or previously; not just something innovative, but something useful and truly relevant to them in their own endeavors.)

To achieve effective membership involvement in your local communities, I suggest several "attitude adjustments," for openers.

When your local boards are confronted with staff negotiations and collective bargaining matters, how about remembering that your role is not to turn staff and board members into an advocate-adversary relationship just because the law seems to force you momentarily into that position. How about perceiving yourselves as the bridge, the means through which school staff and school public accommodate their respective valid concerns and merge these concerns into a "going concern" for education.

When you are lobbying for more money or less control or whatever, how about remembering that the local schools are not your schools and the schools' problems are not your problems; they are the communities' schools and the communities' problems. You are again the bridge. . .the means through which supporting coalitions are formed to solve the problems.

To gain respect, to gain credibility, to become more effective, how about adjusting your attitudes (singly and collectively) toward public opinion about schools and about board members. Someone has suggested "the feeble tremble before public opinion, the foolish defy it, the wise judge it, and the skillful direct it."

The success of no endeavor devised by persons within our "pluralistic society" is more crucial to mankind's future than the effective execution of our public system of education. The success of this system relies almost exclusively on public opinion. School directors, boards and their associations can become effective in this pluralistic society of ours when they determine it is necessary to direct public opinion toward greater involvement, investment and support in our public schools, rather than follow it:

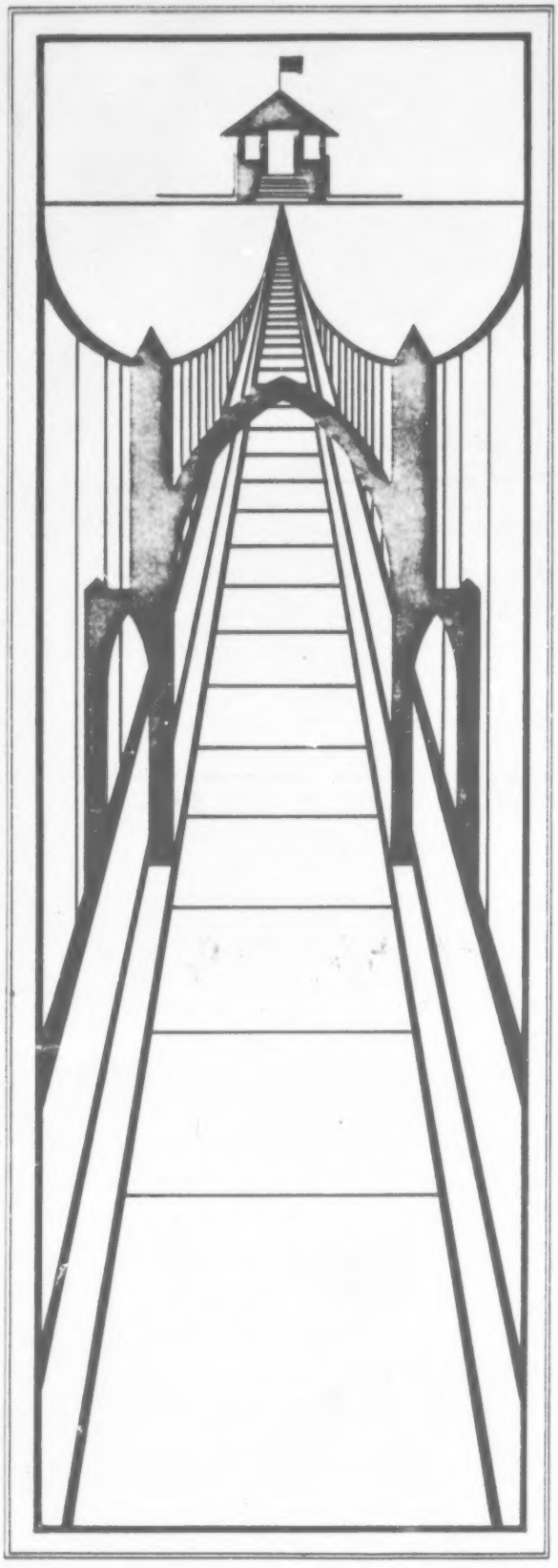
-- When you decide to act to influence public opinion, not to react exclusively to influences within it.

-- When you worry less about who is influencing the character of today's schools and more about how to coalesce these interests into more meaningful, over-all support for public education.

Historically, the public has allowed its institutions to languish, be dissolved or replaced for one of two reasons: (1) the original need for which a particular institution was created no longer exists (the public's problem has been solved) or (2) the problem and the need persists, but the institution functioned poorly (it acted insufficiently, irrelevantly, irresponsibly or unresponsively, in relation to peoples' expectations).

Obviously (at least to me), there has never been a time when there was greater reason for school boards and their associations to provide public educational leadership and direction.

And never a time when members, boards and their associations had less excuse not to.



BUILDING BRIDGES:

School Board Members' Political Roles

A WORKSHOP

The Local School Community

KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP

These materials have been produced as part of "Keys to School Boardsmanship," a project to develop new materials in boardsmanship education for local school board members. It is a joint effort among:

- The Association of Alaska School Boards
- The Idaho School Boards Association
- The Montana School Boards Association
- The Oregon School Boards Association
- The Washington State School Directors' Association
- The National School Boards Association
- The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

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These works were developed under Contract #400-80-0105 with the National Institute of Education, United States Department of Education. However, the content does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of that agency, and no official endorsement of these materials should be inferred.

KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This unit of the Building Bridges Workshop is concerned with the local politics of education and the school board's role in them.

Politics, for the purpose of this workshop, is defined as the competition surrounding the definition and control of policy. Political decisions, as policy decisions, determine who gets what, how, and when, in Laswell's classic phrase.

Clearly, there are political (though not particularly partisan) dimensions to boardsmanship at the local level. Board decisions and policies regarding school programs, budget and program cuts, school closures, desegregation, and many other matters are made in a political environment of competing pressures, values and constituencies.

How a board handles its basic political responsibilities to be representative, to be responsive, and to engage in influencing and being influenced provide the focal points for this workshop.

Through your participation in the workshop proceedings and activities, you will gain more understanding of the political dimensions of boardsmanship and how you and other participants view your roles and responsibilities. You will not find "the right answers" here. As always, these will come as a result of your own board and district solutions to problems it may be facing.

WORKSHEET 1: ELECTIONS

Please recall your first (or most recent) election to the school board. Answer the following questions candidly and be prepared to discuss your ideas.

1. Why did you stand for election to the board? What expectations did you have?

2. Why did community members vote for you? What expectations did they have?

IDEA PAPER 1: PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS FOR SCHOOL BOARDS

School board elections in each community take on a unique character depending upon issues, personalities of candidates, the record of the incumbent board and public perceptions and sentiments. Nevertheless, communities tend to have some enduring expectations for their school boards, as identified by Goldhammer in his 1964 study. Community members expect their school boards to:

- Promote the public and common interest
- Uphold community values and traditions
- Listen to grievances and concerns
- Supervise the professional educators
- Conserve community resources
- Promote rights and interests

More recent information confirms these notions. Newly elected school board members in a 1979 survey reported that the most important issues in their campaigns were:

- School taxes
- Rising costs
- The instructional program
- The superintendent's performance
- Student discipline

Many board members report that improvement of school programs is their first priority when running for a board position. However, most report that after their election, issues such as collective bargaining, the budget and buildings demand most of their time and attention.

WORKSHEET 2: STYLES OF REPRESENTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

For each pair of statements below, circle the one (A or B) which best represents your views.

1. A. As an elected official, my job is to represent the views of the public in board decisions.

   B. Whatever community sentiment, my job is to exercise my own judgment in board decisions.

2. A. The board should actively be in charge of the policy making process.

   B. The superintendent should present the board with policy recommendations.

3. A. I seek the opinions of my constituents in the community in important decisions before the board.

   B. I seek out broad community opinion in important board decisions.

4. A. Candidates for board positions should campaign on their philosophies and the issues.

   B. Campaigns for board positions should be based upon the stature of the candidates.

5. A. The superintendent should present alternative policy recommendations with an even hand.

   B. The superintendent should present his/her preference in policy recommendations to the board.

6. A. The board should hold the superintendent strictly accountable for carrying out board policies.

   B. The board should give the superintendent broad latitude in carrying out board policies.

7. A. The board's most important function is as a legislative, policy-making body.

   B. The board's most important task is in selecting the superintendent.

8. A. I seek out the opinions of my constituents in decisions before the board.

   B. Board decisions should be based upon the good of the entire school district.

9. A. Board members are accountable to the community for their performance.

   B. Whatever community sentiment may be, I was elected to exercise my own judgment in board decisions.

10. A. The board should actively be in charge of the policy process.

    B. The superintendent should be given broad latitude for carrying out board policies.

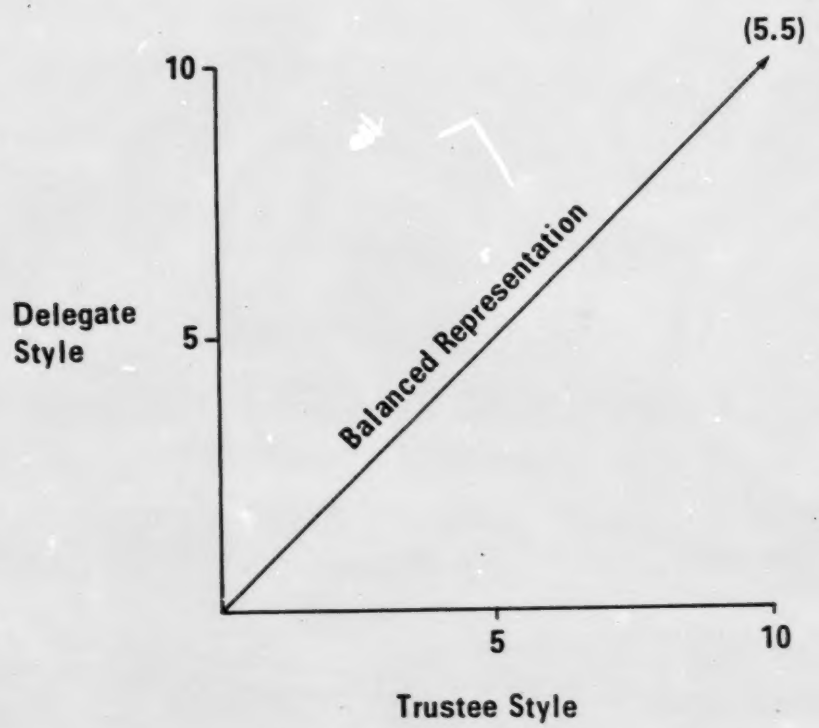
WORKSHEET 3: SCORING THE REPRESENTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

In the chart below, circle the letter you chose for each item. Then, add the number of letters in each column.

ITEM			
	1	A	B
	2	A	B
	3	A	B
	4	A	B
	5	A	B
	6	A	B
	7	A	B
	8	A	B
	9	A	B
	10	A	B
		TOTAL_____ (Delegate Style)	TOTAL_____ (Trustee Style)

GRAPHING YOUR SCORES

In the graph below, plot your scores from the questionnaire above, and draw a line from the 0 point to intersect with your plotted scores.



IDEA PAPER 2: INTERPRETING YOUR SCORES ON THE REPRESENTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The political styles assessment activity is designed to give you a "reading" of how you see your political role as a board member.

As a result of the assessment activity, you should have a score for both delegate and trustee styles. There are no "right answers" in this activity. Rather, your score should tell you which of these styles you prefer and are most comfortable with.

The delegate and trustee styles are really styles of representation. The delegate views his/her job as representing the views of constituents (public, community, interest groups, etc.) in board decision-making processes. The trustee, on the other hand, views his/her job as exercising personal judgment in decision-making processes. The delegate views his/her election as "sending a message" from the electorate. The trustee sees his/her election as a mandate to vote his/her conscience in issues before the board.

In reality, many board members will exercise both political styles, depending upon the issue at hand, community sentiment, other board members' positions and the position of the superintendent. Thus, if your scores show that you employ both delegate and trustee styles, you are a mature and sophisticated board "politician."

If your scores indicate that yours is primarily a delegate style, you may wish to think about the following questions:

- Am I so committed to constituent groups that I don't have latitude for compromise in decisions before the board?
- Does my position regarding accountability give the superintendent adequate latitude to carry out policies of the board?

If your scores show that yours is primarily a trustee style, you may wish to consider the following questions:

- Am I in touch and aware enough of community values, sentiments and opinions?
- Do I adequately examine, with my fellow board members and superintendent, all of the alternatives before deciding upon a policy direction?

WORKSHEET 4: RESPONSIVENESS

Please complete the sentence below. Use as many ideas as you wish.

A school board is responsive to its community when. . . .

IDEA PAPER 3: SCHOOL BOARD RESPONSIVENESS

Introduction

We Americans expect our elected representatives to be responsive to our problems, needs, ideas and concerns.

School board members, as politicians, are deeply involved with the problems of representative and responsive local government. The board is the "court of last resort" for a variety of community, parent and staff requests, proposals and grievances. The board is the embodiment of local control of the schools. School board policies attempt to treat equitably and fairly the problems and issues felt by many in the school community.

Local Pressures and Responsiveness

- Which proposals are reasonable? Which criticisms are valid?
- How widespread is the perception of the problem in the community?
- What is the school system already doing to address a particular issue?
- How should I as an individual board member respond to a citizen's request for assistance?
- What will it cost?

These are some of the questions that board members ask themselves, each other and the superintendent when confronted with criticisms, problems and suggestions for improvement.

School board responsiveness to the public must be different from reaction to immediate pressures and problems. This is so because effective board response is on a policy basis, rather than on an individual problem basis. A policy is a decision which the board would make in essentially the same way time after time. Having the policy in written form available to the public and staff means that the board won't have to make the decision over and over.

Policy decisions tend to be long-range decisions regarding direction of the school system.

Kinds of Responsiveness

When we say that a local school board is or is not responsive to the public, what do we mean?

A recent study (Salisbury, 1980) shows that community activists (citizen volunteers on advisory committees, school programs and other activities) equate the quality of the school system with the responsiveness of the school board to their requests and concerns. If the board listened to the concerns and recommendations of these citizen activists, they rated the school system and programs highly. On the other hand, when the board did not demonstrate this kind of responsiveness, citizen activists rated the quality of the schools much lower.

Responsiveness of government, including local school boards, can mean five different things. Moreover, a board might be responsive in one of these five areas, and not responsive in others. Tucker and Ziegler (1977) identified the following kinds of responsiveness:

- Policy Responsiveness. This refers to the match between the board's policies or policy conduct and constituents' preferences and demands. School boards generally rate highly in this area.

- Service Responsiveness. This refers to the advantages and benefits which board members are able to obtain for particular constituents. Interestingly, school boards rate very highly in this kind of responsiveness. The high rating is due not so much as a result of board action, but as a result of referrals the board or its members make through administrative channels.

- Public Goods Responsiveness. This refers to advantages or benefits which the board can obtain for the constituency as a whole. This kind of responsiveness is not as applicable to school boards as it is to politicians who represent a district or a state.

- Symbolic Responsiveness. This refers to constituents' feelings of being represented because of symbolic public actions of the board or board members. School boards don't rate especially highly in this kind of responsiveness, but certainly their rating is in line with other politicians and governing units.

- Receptivity to Public Influence. This refers to constituents' feelings that the board has listened to them and been influenced by them. School board meetings do not rate very highly in this kind of responsiveness. However, private contact with school board members is perceived to result in greater influence.

WORKSHEET 5: WHO INFLUENCES OUR BOARD?

Below, you will find a list of actors in the politics of education at the local level. Place a check mark next to those who, in your opinion, exert the most influence on your school board.

_____ Teachers

_____ Parents

_____ Administrators

_____ Local government

_____ State government

_____ Local political parties

_____ Politically powerful groups

_____ Students

_____ Others (write in)

IDEA PAPER 4: SCHOOL BOARD AUTHORITY AND POWER

It is no surprise that school board power and authority are under constant challenge in today's political environment. Teachers' organizations are testing school board management authority. Courts are testing the legality of school board policy and procedures. State legislatures and education agencies are challenging the policy-making authority of school boards.

School boards can maintain and strengthen local control of schools through a judicious and astute exercise of their power.

Through state statute, school boards have considerable authority to establish, operate, and maintain the school district, levy taxes, hire and negotiate with professional educators, select instructional materials, and make many other decisions.

In addition to exercising its authority, however, a school board must find creative uses of power and influence to make the best decisions for its district and community.

Unlike professional educators, whose power is based upon <u>expertise</u>, school board power is based on its legal authority and upon the leadership, respect and credibility of its members. A board exercises its power through influencing and being influenced by various ideas, suggestions and opinions within the school community--those of administrators, teachers, parents, business representatives, taxpayers.

A board exercises its power for the <u>public interest</u>, rather than for the special interest. Board power is <u>integrative power</u>, bringing many voices and viewpoints together into harmony, if not unison.

In our diverse and pluralistic communities today, negotiation and problem solving are perhaps the key political skills of a board in exercising its power, since these result in an exchange of viewpoints and a broad base of support for board decisions in important areas.

WORKSHEET 6: SUMMING UP

On this worksheet, record any ideas, techniques or procedures that have come to your attention during the workshop which you feel you would like to explore further with your board at home.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Please answer the following questions frankly. Your responses will help to improve the presentation of the workshop in the future.

1. My overall rating of this workshop is:

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent		Fair		Poor

Comments:

2. The workshop objectives were:

_____ 1. Clear to me

_____ 2. Somewhat clear

_____ 3. A mystery to me

Comments:

3. What I expected from the workshop, but did not get, was. . .

4. A. The workshop leader(s)' knowledge of the topic was:

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent		Fair		Poor

Comments:

B. The workshop leader(s)' presentation of the workshop (instructions, clarity, etc.) was:

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent		Fair		Poor

Comments:

C. The workshop leader(s)' helpfulness to me and other participants was:

1	2	3	4	5
Very Helpful		Helpful		Not Helpful

Comments:

5. I learned most from

_____ Lecturettes given by the leader

_____ Small group discussions

_____ The reading material

_____ Questions discussed in the group

_____ Other activities

6. The most valuable thing(s) I learned from the workshop was. . .

BUILDING BRIDGES:

School Board Members' Political Roles

A WORKSHOP

The State Arena

KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP

These materials have been produced as part of "Keys to School Boardsmanship," a project to develop new materials in boardsmanship education for local school board members. It is a joint effort among:

- The Association of Alaska School Boards
- The Idaho School Boards Association
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KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This unit of the Building Bridges Workshop is concerned with the state arena for the politics of education and the local board's role in it.

Increasingly, state legislatures, departments of education, governors, courts, and other actors have been impacting schools in a variety of ways--fiscally, policy-wise, through regulation and court directive. As a result, policy making authority has shifted considerably to the state level in recent years, and the discretionary policy making of local boards has been diluted. Local control of schools continues to exist, but not without challenge by significant and powerful actors at the state level.

In this workshop, these trends and changes are identified and analyzed. More importantly, avenues and resources for school board participation in the state arena of educational politics are suggested.

Your school boards association has, as a primary purpose, representing the school board presence in the legislative process in your state capitol. As key spokespersons and interpreters for your local district, you can be a vital contributor to the shape of education in the future.

WORKSHEET 1: LOCAL CONTROL

Please answer the following questions and be prepared to discuss your ideas.

1. What does local control mean to you?

2. What are some important areas for local control? Circle the key ones.

Curriculum/Programs	Teacher Performance
Finance/Funding	Instructional Materials
Buildings	Extracurricular Programs
Others (Write in)	

WORKSHEET 2: OTHER GOVERNMENTS

Take a few minutes to consider the following questions.

1. What level of government should determine the curriculum of our schools?

   a. Federal government

   b. State government

   c. Local school board

   Give reasons for your answer.

2. Do you think that state and federal regulations are more likely to help or hinder public education here?

   a. Help

   b. Hinder

   c. Make no difference

   d. Don't know

   Give reasons for your answer.

3. In the years ahead, would you like to see the local school board have greater responsibility for running the schools, or less, than they do today?

   a. Greater responsibility

   b. Less responsibility

   c. About the same

   d. Don't know

   Give reasons for your answer.

IDEA PAPER 1: PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL CONTROL

During a period of declining public confidence in public schools as reflected in Gallup Polls over the past decade, public support for local control of schools remains high.

This information is summarized here for your later reference and use. The information, or the questions themselves, may be useful to you in:

- Discussions of your board
- Communications with your constituents and community
- Local community surveys or polls
- Communications with your legislators

The Questions and Responses

These are the questions and responses from various Gallup Polls on public attitudes toward education. In all cases, the responses are national ones. Because of the scientific approach employed by Gallup Polls, the results are a very close approximation of the attitudes of a cross section of American adults.

1. Who should decide what is taught in the schools?

Source: 12th Annual Gallup Poll of Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, 1980

a.	Federal government	9%
b.	State government	15%
c.	Local school board	68%
d.	Don't know	8%

2. Do you think that state and federal regulations are more likely to help or hinder public education here? Why?

Source: 10th Annual Gallup Poll of Attitudes Toward Public Schools, 1978

a.	Help	23%
b.	Hinder	44%
c.	No difference	5%
d.	Don't know	28%

Why do they hinder?

- Ignore differences among school districts in:
  - -- Wealth
  - -- Minority groups
  - -- Size

3. In the years ahead, would you like to see the local school board have greater responsibility for running the schools, or less, than they do today?

Source: 8th Annual Gallup Poll of Attitudes Toward Public Schools, 1976.

a.	Greater responsibility	67%
b.	Less responsibility	10%
c.	About the same	15%
d.	Don't know	8%

4. How much confidence do you have in these American institutions to serve the public's needs?

Source: 12th Annual Gallup Poll of Attitudes Toward Public Schools, 1980.

		Great Deal (%)	Fair Amount (%)	Very Little (%)
a.	Church	42	40	15
b.	Public schools	28	46	20
c.	Courts	19	45	28
d.	Local government	19	51	23
e.	State government	17	52	24
f.	National government	14	47	31
g.	Labor unions	17	38	30
h.	Big business	13	42	36

It is clear from these polls that public confidence in local school boards remains high, even though public confidence in the schools themselves has declined. What does this mean for local school boards? Here are some interpretations.

- People have greater confidence in the governmental units and instiutions closest to home because these are seen as more responsive to local needs.
- People have greatest confidence in the local school board to address their concerns about school problems and improvement.
- The public may not fully understand the constraints (legal and regulatory) within which school boards must operate.
- The strong public confidence and support for local school boards is an important political resource which can be mobilized.

WORKSHEET 3: ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY

In this activity, you will be assessing the role and authority of the state education agency (state board, state superintendent and state department of education).

A. Give <u>two ratings</u> for each area of authority: (a) how much authority it <u>now has</u>, and (b) how much authority it should be given by the legislature.

In your ratings, use the following scale:

1 = all authority, 2 = nearly all, 3 = some, 4 = none

Area	Ratings	
	(a) The SEA Has Authority Now	(b) The SEA Should Have Authority
1. Curriculum and course of study		
2. Professional certification		
3. School district organization and recognition		
4. Federal aid and assistance programs		
5. Buildings and sites		
6. School finance, including the state foundation program		
7. School desegregation		
8. Assessment of student performance		
9. Planning and research		
10. Levying statewide taxes for public school finances		

B. Through discussion with other workshop participants, identify <u>areas of greatest difference</u> in your ratings.

C. For those areas of greatest difference, discuss the question, "What can school boards do to reduce this difference?"

WORKSHEET 4: GREATER LEGISLATIVE EFFECTIVENESS

Please answer the following questions and be prepared to discuss your ideas.

1. How can school board members be more effective in working with legislators?

2. What additional information do board members need in order to increase their effectiveness with legislators?

IDEA PAPER 2: SCHOOL BOARD CREDIBILITY AS AN IMPORTANT POLITICAL RESOURCE

Legislators make several points about school board members in the legislative process:

- School board members have credibility. As elected local officials, school board members speak for their communities and districts in a believable way. Legislators see board members, more than professional educators, as spokespersons for the broad local school community with little or no self-serving interest.

- School board members under-utilize their credibility as spokespersons. Many legislators say that they rarely hear from board members regarding problems, needs and conditions of their districts.

- Despite fewer numbers and less money than other education interest groups, school boards associations are seen by legislators as being effective in the legislative process, second to, and in some cases equal to, teacher organizations. Again, this effectiveness results from the credibility of school boards as representatives of their school systems.

School board members can increase their effectiveness in the legislative process both individually and collectively by recognizing their valuable political resource--credibility, and by gathering and using information regarding impacts of proposed legislation in direct communication with legislators.

WORKSHEET 5: NINE ISSUES IN PUBLIC SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Instructions: Below, you will find nine statements* regarding the governance of education, and roles of the legislature, the local school board and professional educators. Please indicate where you stand on these statements. You will be asked during the worksession to share your answers.

Statements*	Where I Stand				
	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
1. It is up to the legislature to take the lead in setting forth what ought to be done about public school needs.					
2. The legislature should limit itself to determining broad goals for the public schools and leave most policy making authority to the state board or state superintendent.					
3. The most important task for the state board of education should be to develop major policy proposals for the legislature to consider.					
4. Local control of education is the basic principle that should guide the state in making policies for the public schools.					
5. Local school officials know best how to run their districts and the role of the state department of education should be confined to assisting these officials in doing what they wish to do.					

*These statements have been adapted from The Educational Governance Project, 1973.

6.	Schools in this state are much too slow in adopting needed educational innovations.	Strongly Disagree 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Strongly Agree 5
7.	Despite all we hear about "crises" in education, our public schools are working well for the great majority of students.	Strongly Disagree 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Strongly Agree 5
8.	The apparent need for more money to run the public schools is largely because educators are inefficient in their management of fiscal resources.	Strongly Disagree 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Strongly Agree 5
9.	Educators keep asking for ever-increasing state spending without being willing to show any real return for the taxpayers' additional dollars.	Strongly Disagree 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Strongly Agree 5

WORKSHEET 6: ANALYZING THE ISSUES

You have been assigned a problem to analyze and solve. The following guidelines will be helpful in your task.

- Why have we, as school board members, taken the position we have on the issue?

- Why, in our opinion, have legislators taken the position they have on the issue?

- What are some of the ideas and information we need to communicate to our legislators about the issue?

- What are some ways we can carry out this communication?

WORKSHEET 7: LEGISLATIVE INVOLVEMENT QUIZ

Are these statements true or false from your point of view?

T/F

_____ 1. The best time to influence legislators is during the legislative session.

_____ 2. School board members should rely upon their association's lobbying activities to effectively promote statewide legislative proposals.

_____ 3. Board members should leave lobbying to the association's professional staff.

_____ 4. An effective school board legislative program requires a lot of money.

_____ 5. As local community leaders and officials, school board members should not become involved in the state legislative process.

_____ 6. Board members are too busy to have time for legislative activities.

_____ 7. Education and politics don't mix.

_____ 8. Local board resolutions are helpful in supporting legislative proposals and activities.

_____ 9. Since school board members represent such a diversity of opinions, it is really impossible to put together an effective legislative program.

IDEA PAPER 3: LEGISLATIVE INVOLVEMENT

WHY GET INVOLVED?

State legislatures are taking an increasingly active role in education matters, from collective bargaining and finance to student learning objectives and competencies. School board members need to realize the impact of this activity, and represent their own district's interests in issues before the legislature.

WHAT ARE INGREDIENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE STATE-WIDE EFFORT TO INFLUENCE LEGISLATION?

There are four essential elements:

- The availability of reliable information, especially on the local impact of proposed legislation
- Credible and able spokesmen and advocates
- Cohesive membership, where all members are supporting a common position
- A reliable local network, ensuring that legislators are hearing the same thing at home and in the capitol

WHEN SHOULD POSITIONS ON LEGISLATION BE DEVELOPED?

Board member and association positions should be developed well in advance of legislative sessions. This provides the greatest opportunity for influence and for collaboration with other groups and organizations. Legislators and candidates are most sensitive to constituent views prior to the primary election.

WHERE SHOULD BOARD MEMBERS DEVOTE THEIR ATTENTION IN LEGISLATIVE MATTERS?

Board members need to be effective in four different geographic areas. In order of importance, these are:

- The school district and community
- The legislative district level
- The major media centers
- The state capitol

WHAT KINDS OF INFLUENCE DO LEGISLATORS RESPOND TO?

In order to be effective in influencing legislators, board members need to be aware of the many pressures at work. Among these are:

- The legislator's personal conviction
- Constituency pressures
- Interest group lobbyists
- Pressure from the executive branch
- Political party pressures
- The influence of legislative staff

Typically, personal conviction, constituency pressures and legislative staff are the most important sources of influence upon legislators.

WHO HAS THE GREATEST INFLUENCE WITH LEGISLATORS?

This is a key question for board members interested in becoming involved. It is seldom the association's professional staff. It is more often a local school board within the legislator's district.

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY TO INFLUENCE LEGISLATORS?

In developing a strategy to influence legislators, school board members should consider the following ideas:

- Be able to state your objective clearly.
- Have accurate information and facts ready.
- Be positive, not demanding or critical.
- Contact legislators individually, but don't impose on their time.
- Be persistent.
- Show how your ideas will be a positive benefit for children and schools.

IDEA PAPER 4: SOME ACTION IDEAS FOR SCHOOL BOARD INVOLVEMENT IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Included here is a "starter list" of ideas for greater school board involvement and effectivenss in the legislative process. The ideas, though drawn from the experiences of other boards, may or may not fit your situation.

Election of Legislators

- Interview candidates for legislative races for their positions on local control, collective bargaining, school finance or other issues of importance to your school system.
- Identify and support candidates who best represent your district's interests.
- Educate and mobilize your community in important legislative elections.

During the Interim

- Establish contact with your legislator during the interim session. This is a time when he or she may be most able to listen.
- Arrange for a tour of your school buildings and programs for your legislator.
- Invite your legislator to serve on an advisory committee or task force.

During the Legislative Session

- Prepare a district fact sheet or book for your legislator. It would include enrollment, budget and staffing information to serve as background.
- Maintain a newspaper clipping service for your legislator, so that he or she receives all local news items about school concerns.
- Establish a district legislative review committee to monitor crucial pieces of legislation during the session. The committee should have board, staff and community representation to aid in activating communications when needed.
- Write your legislator to express your views on important pieces of legislation.

- Encourage your board to develop resolutions on key pieces of legislation, and be sure your legislator receives these.

- Discuss the role of the board legislative liaison to your association. Make clearer the board's expectations about this important job.

Other Ideas

Add any other ideas for increasing board involvement and effectiveness in the legislative process.

WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Please answer the following questions frankly. Your responses will help to improve the presentation of the workshop in the future.

1. My overall rating of this workshop is:

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent		Fair		Poor

Comments:

2. The workshop objectives were:

_____ 1. Clear to me

_____ 2. Somewhat clear

_____ 3. A mystery to me

Comments:

3. What I expected from the workshop, but did not get, was. . .

4. A. The workshop leader(s)' knowledge of the topic was:

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent		Fair		Poor

Comments:

B. The workshop leader(s)' presentation of the workshop (instructions, clarity, etc.) was:

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent		Fair		Poor

Comments:

C. The workshop leader(s)' helpfulness to me and other participants was:

1	2	3	4	5
Very Helpful		Helpful		Not Helpful

Comments:

5. I learned most from:

_____ Lecturettes given by the leader

_____ Small group discussions

_____ The reading material

_____ Questions discussed in the group

_____ Other activities

6. The most valuable thing(s) I learned from the workshop was. . .

BUILDING BRIDGES:

School Board Members' Political Roles

A WORKSHOP

Building Coalitions

KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP

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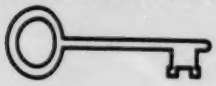
KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP



Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The focus of this unit of the Building Bridges Workshop is upon coalitions and coalition-building for public education, and the roles school board members can play in this important enterprise.

The long-standing coalitions which have made up the education "family" and "lobby" is in considerable disarray at a very critical point in the politics of education. The labor-management conflict, the public confidence problem, the declining enrollments and the private school challenge all contribute to a serious political climate for public schools.

Coalitions, even for short term objectives, are one approach to developing the political force needed to meet the challenges of our time.

But coalitions and coalition building are not easy to establish or to maintain. Participants in coalitions need to go in "with their eyes open and their feet on the ground" to be successful and effective.

The activities in this workshop are designed to help you:

- Understand coalitions
- Analyze the political climate of public education
- Identify advantages and disadvantages of coalitions for school boards
- Realistically analyze the issues which help and hinder coalition building efforts
- Develop some preliminary steps in planning for coalition building in your district and community

WORKSHEET 1: ISSUES AND POTENTIALS

Please respond to and be ready to discuss your answers to the following questions.

1. What are the three greatest challenges facing our school system now and in the immediate future?

2. What other groups and individuals share your (board's) concern about these challenges (parents, teachers, administrators, legislators, etc.)?

3. Are these groups and individuals now meeting and working together to address the challenges?

IDEA PAPER 1: COALITIONS

Coalitions are temporary alliances among parties or factions to achieve some mutual goal. Coalitions can be formal or informal, short-term or long-term, effective or ineffective.

Coalition-building is a useful strategy for the education family to discover and use again, not only to secure needed legislation, funding, or other objectives, but also to maintain decision-making prerogatives at the local level.

Legislators are increasingly frustrated by the fragmentation within the education family and lobby, with teachers, board members and administrators following courses of self-interest. This conflict, and the resulting lack of consensus about priorities, leaves the legislature in the position to make decisions for the schools rather than with the schools.

Coalitions, in order to be effective, require some important and difficult commitments from participants. There must be agreements, for example:

- To suspend competition and conflict, at least temporarily
- To contribute resources, including time, staff, information and perhaps money
- To cooperate in achieving the objective
- To share strategic decision-making without domination of any single party

Failure to develop and follow through with these agreements typically results in failure of the coalition. And failure of the effort makes future efforts even more difficult.

Coalition partners must enter this relationship with the clear understanding that some autonomy and some options for individual action will now be limited. Partners to coalitions, as in marriages, give up some self-interests for the sake of a common, larger purpose. Unwillingness or inability to make this commitment will weaken the coalition effort.

WORKSHEET 2: COALITIONS: GOALS AND BARRIERS

Give your response to the questions below, and be prepared to discuss them in your group.

1. What are some issues facing public schools upon which school board members, teachers, administrators and parents can agree and unite?

2. What are some issues upon which school board members, teachers, administrators and parents are likely to disagree?

WORKSHEET 3: IDENTIFYING COALITION POTENTIALS

For the groups listed below, write down your thoughts about how coalition-building might be approached. What areas of mutual interest and concern do school board members share with these groups? Rate the potentials by ranking the candidates in order of highest (1) to lowest (8) potential.

Coalition Candidates	Mutual Interests or Concerns
Business/Industry	
Teachers/Teachers' Organizations	
State Board of Education	
State Department of Education	
Administrators/Administrators' Organizations	
PTAs/PTOs	
Others	

IDEA PAPER 2: SUGGESTIONS FOR COALITION BUILDING

Effective coalitions grow out of a common perception of needs, a mutual agreement about goals, and a commitment to unified action.

The following guidelines have grown out of coalition-building experiences of education groups.

- Keep the focus on areas of agreement. Parties to a coalition may and should negotiate parts of the "contract agreement." They may withhold approval of some parts of it. However, each party should support the overall agreement.

- Strive for consensus, but recognize that unanimous agreement within the coalition is unlikely. Work out the ground rules for decision-making early on.

- Ensure that all coalition members have an opportunity to be heard and to have influence. Don't allow a single member to dominate discussion, decisions or actions.

- Keep coalition activities in their proper perspective. Don't permit them to become all consuming at the expense of member activities.

- Recognize and acknowledge strengths of each coalition member. The strengths may lie in different areas: knowledge/information, political know-how, membership, credibility, etc. Each member must find roles within the coalition to "play its strong suit."

WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Please answer the following questions frankly. Your responses will help to improve the presentation of the workshop in the future.

1. My overall rating of this workshop is:

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent		Fair		Poor

Comments:

2. The workshop objectives were:

_____ 1. Clear to me

_____ 2. Somewhat clear

_____ 3. A mystery to me

Comments:

3. What I expected from the workshop, but did not get, was. . .

4. A. The workshop leader(s)' knowledge of the topic was:

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent		Fair		Poor

Comments:

B. The workshop leader(s)' presentation of the workshop (instructions, clarity, etc.) was:

1	2	3	4	5
Excellent		Fair		Poor

Comments:

C. The workshop leader(s)' helpfulness to me and other participants was:

1	2	3	4	5
Very Helpful		Helpful		Not Helpful

Comments:

5. I learned most from

_____ Lecturettes given by the leader

_____ Small group discussions

_____ The reading material

_____ Questions discussed in the group

_____ Other activities

6. The most valuable thing(s) I learned from the workshop was. . .

RELATED TRANSPARENCIES

PUBLIC'S EXPECTATIONS

PROMOTE PUBLIC INTEREST

UPHOLD COMMUNITY VALUES

LISTEN TO GRIEVANCES

SUPERVISE PROFESSIONALS

CONSERVATORS OF RESOURCES

PROMOTE RIGHTS AND INTERESTS

BB 1

POLITICAL ISSUES

Important campaign issues in Board Members' first campaign

ISSUE	%
• School Taxes	28
• Rising Costs	25
• Instructional Program "Back to Basics"	23
• Superintendent's Performance	22
• Student Discipline	20

Source: New School Board Members: A Portrait
NSBA Research Report 1979-1
Used by permission

BB 2

POLITICS

The Competition Surrounding the
Definition and Control
of

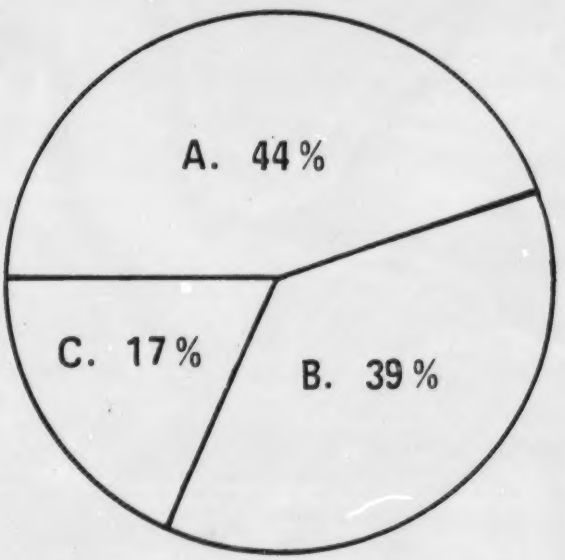
POLICY

BB 3

POLITICS

Do you think it (the board) is politically motivated? That is, does local politics play a part in decisions made by the Board?

A. Yes
B. No
C. Don't know



Source: 1978 Gallup Poll

BB 4

REPRESENTATION – TWO WAYS

School boards have a responsibility to:

- Represent the community to the professional educators about perceptions, opinions, expectations and concerns
- Represent the school district to the community about needs, plans, programs, outcomes

The People Look at their School Boards

In your opinion, how good a job does the school board in this district do when it comes to representing the views and opinions of people like yourself?

% OF ALL ADULTS

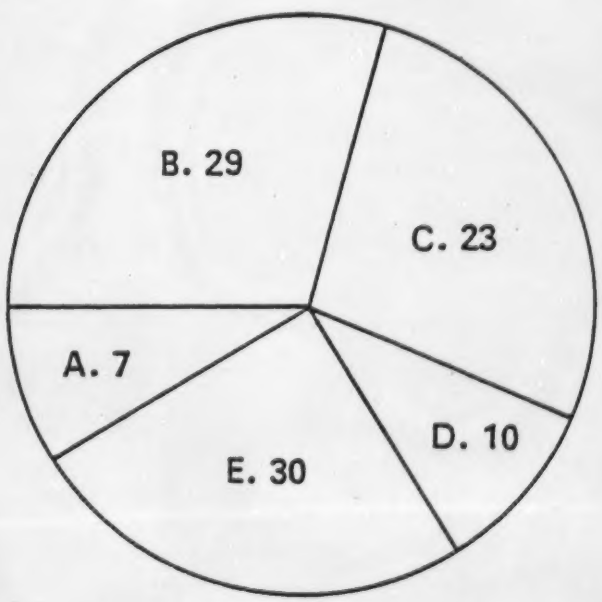
A. Excellent

B. Good

C. Fair

D. Poor

E. Don't know



BB 6

POLITICAL STYLES

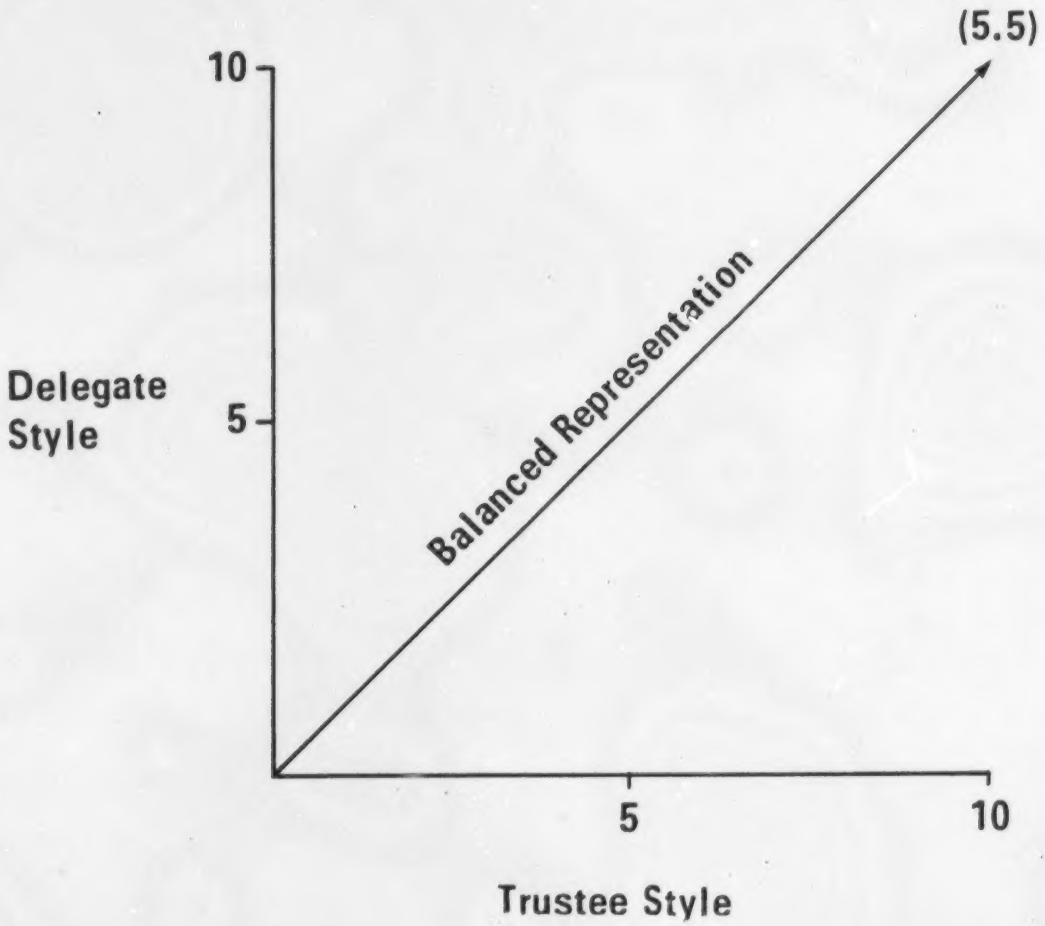
DELEGATE

- Votes to represent views of constituency
- Elected because of position on the issues
- Likely to prefer debate of issues
- A coalition-builder

TRUSTEE

- Votes according to own judgments
- Elected because of stature in community
- Likely to prefer individual persuasion
- An individualist

STYLES OF REPRESENTATION



BB 8

DELEGATE OR TRUSTEE?

Board Members should try not to represent a specific group or constituency in the community but should seek to represent all the people.

YES	80%
NO	15%
DON'T KNOW	5%

WISE	91%
UNWISE	9%

Source: New School Board Members: A Portrait
NSBA Research Report 1979-1
Used by permission

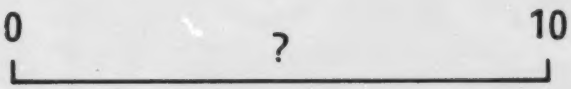
BB 9

IS OUR BOARD RESPONSIVE?

- **Policy Responsiveness**

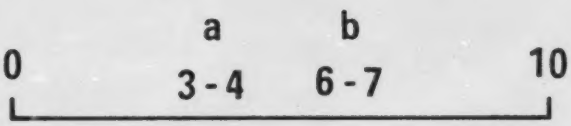
- **Service Responsiveness**

- **Public Goods Responsiveness**



- **Symbolic Responsiveness**

- **Receptivity to Public Influence**
  - a. **Board Meetings**
  - b. **Private Contacts**



Source: Tucker & Ziegler, 1977

BB 10

WHO INFLUENCES OUR BOARD?

_____ Teachers

_____ Parents

_____ Administrators

_____ Local Government

_____ State Government

_____ Local Political Parties

_____ Politically Powerful Groups

_____ Students

_____ Others

_____

_____

_____

BB 11

Views and opinions which have most influence with school board

	all adults %	parents %	non-parents %
School administrators	43	50	40
Teachers and teacher organizations	33	40	30
Parents	30	38	26
Local government	19	19	18
Politically powerful groups	13	14	12
State government	12	12	11
Students	10	12	9
Local political parties	9	8	10

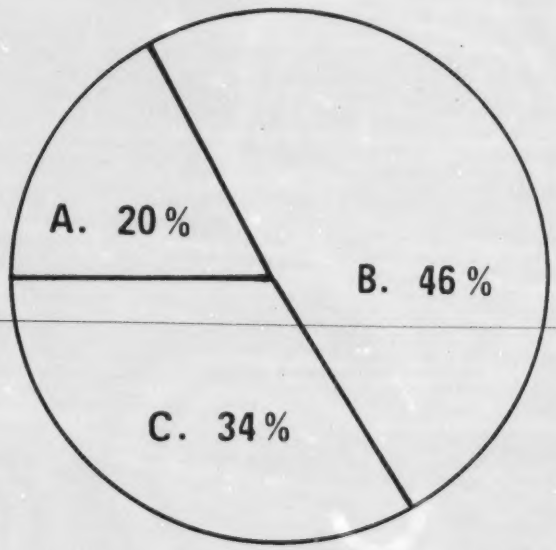
Source: NSBA, The People Look at their School Boards, 1975
Used by permission.

BB 12

INFLUENCE

...is there any group of people in this community that has more influence than it should have in the way schools are run?

A. Yes
B. No
C. Don't know



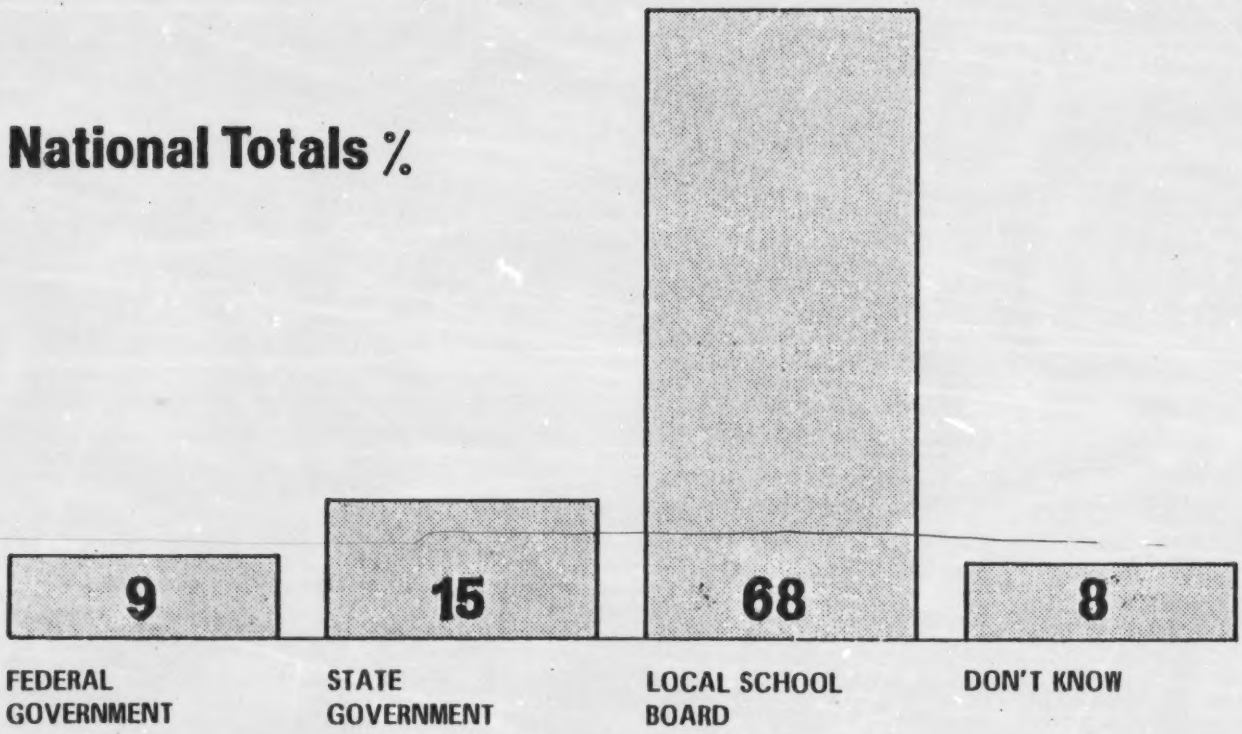
If yes, which groups?

- local school board
- local politicians
- minority organizations
- P.T.A.
- the "wealthy"

Source: 1969 Gallup Poll

BB 13

Who should decide what is taught in the schools?



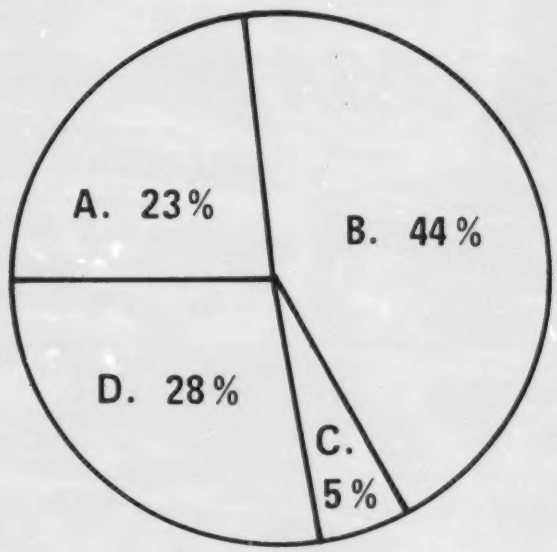
SOURCE: 1980 GALLUP POLL

BB 14

STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Do you think that (regulations regarding education) by State and Federal government are more likely to help or hinder public education here?

A. Help
B. Hinder
C. No difference
D. Don't know



Why do they hinder?

- Ignore differences among school districts in
  - wealth
  - minority groups
  - size

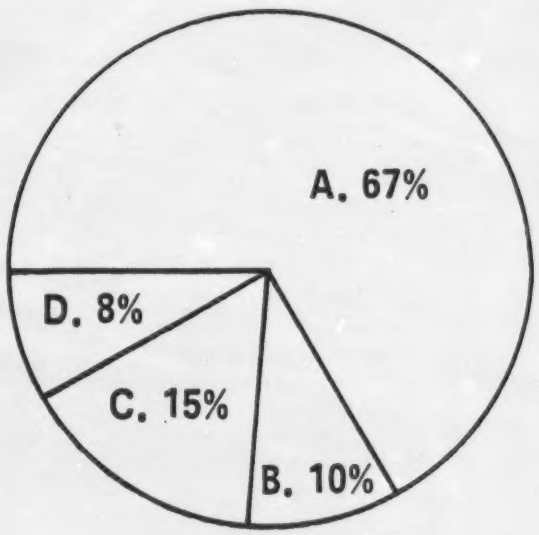
Source: 1978 Gallup Poll

BB 15

LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR EDUCATION

In the years ahead, would you like to see the local school board have greater responsibility for running the schools, or less, than they do today?

A. Greater Responsibility
B. Less Responsibility
C. About the Same
D. Don't Know



Source: 1976 Gallup Poll

BB 16

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS (1980)

	Great Deal (%)	Fair Amount (%)	Very Little (%)
Church	42	40	15
Public Schools	28	46	20
Courts	19	45	28
Local Government	19	51	23
State Government	17	52	24
Federal Government	14	47	31
Labor Unions	17	38	30
Big Business	13	42	36

BB 17

ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY

	Ratings	
	Now Has	Should Have
1. Curriculum and course of study		
2. Professional certification		
3. School district organization and reorganization		
4. Federal aid and assistance programs		
5. Buildings		
6. School finance/state foundation program		
7. School desegregation		
8. Assessment of student performance		
9. Planning and research		
10. Levying statewide taxes for public school finance		

BB 18

CHARACTERISTICS OF STATE LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP

- Thoroughly experienced- professionally and politically
- Long-term involvement in education
- Senior membership status
- Committed - time and energy on education
- Serve on 'money' committees and on education committees
- Equal attention to finance and policy
- Major source of information and contact - State Department of Education
- Linkages with organizations and groups within and outside of state
- Involved in managing conflict over money and control
- Legislative staffs play an important role

BB 19

INFORMATION SOURCES FOR LEGISLATIVE LEADERS AND STATE BOARD MEMBERS

	LEGISLATIVE LEADERS	STATE BOARD MEMBERS
Department of Education (Includes Chief State School Officer)	62%	98%
Teacher Association (NEA Affiliate)	56	11
School Boards Association	40	5
Local School Officials	39	27
Legislative Staff	27	–
Teacher Union (AFT Affiliate)	14	–
Administrators Organization	13	1

from The Educational Governance Project, 1973

BB 20

RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION LEADERS

Individual and Groups	Strategies/Effectiveness	
State Level:	Information Useful	Contact Important
State Board of Education	22%	13%
Department of Education	50%	61%
Teacher Association	32%	50%
* School Boards Association	26%	31%
Governor and Staff	--	30%
Staff of Executive Budget Agency	--	51%

From: Legislative Education Leadership in the States, 1981

BB 21

RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION LEADERS

Individual and Groups	Strategies/Effectiveness	
Local Level:	Information Useful	Contact Important
School Superintendents	--	39%
Teachers and Representatives	--	37%
* School Board Members	--	28%
Parents and Representatives	--	31%
Other Constituents	--	20%
Press	--	8%

From: Legislative Education Leadership in the States, 1981

BB 22

POLICY MAKING RESPONSIBILITY

	LEGISLATIVE LEADERS	STATE BOARD MEMBERS	WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS
1. "...it is up to the legislature to take the lead in setting forth what ought to be done about state public school needs."	77%	49%	
2. "The legislature should limit itself to determining broad goals for the public schools and leave most policy making authority to the State Board or State Superintendent (Commissioner)."	62%	95%	
3. "The most important task for the State Board of Education should be to develop major policy proposals for the legislature to consider."	76%	70%	

from The Educational Governance Project, 1973

BB 23

LOCAL CONTROL OF SCHOOLS

	LEGISLATIVE LEADERS	STATE BOARD MEMBERS	WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS
4. "Local control of education is the basic principle that should guide the state in making policies for the public schools."	52%	67%	
5. "Local school officials know best how to run their districts and the role of the State Department of Education should be confined to assisting these officials in doing what they wish to do."	34%	39%	

BB 24

from The Educational Governance Project, 1973

NEED FOR SCHOOL CHANGES

	LEGISLATIVE LEADERS	STATE BOARD MEMBERS	WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS
6. "Schools in this state are much too slow in adopting needed educational innovations."	62%	33%	
7. "Despite all we hear about 'crises' in educations, our public schools are working well for the great majority of students."	70%	77%	

BB 25

from The Educational Governance Project, 1973

EDUCATOR ACCOUNTABILITY

	LEGISLATIVE LEADERS	STATE BOARD MEMBERS	WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS
8. "The apparent need for more money to run the public schools is largely because educators are inefficient in their management of fiscal resources."	30%	25%	
9. "Educators keep asking for ever-increasing state spending without being willing to show any real return for the taxpayers' additional dollars."	65%	48%	

BB 26

from The Educational Governance Project, 1973

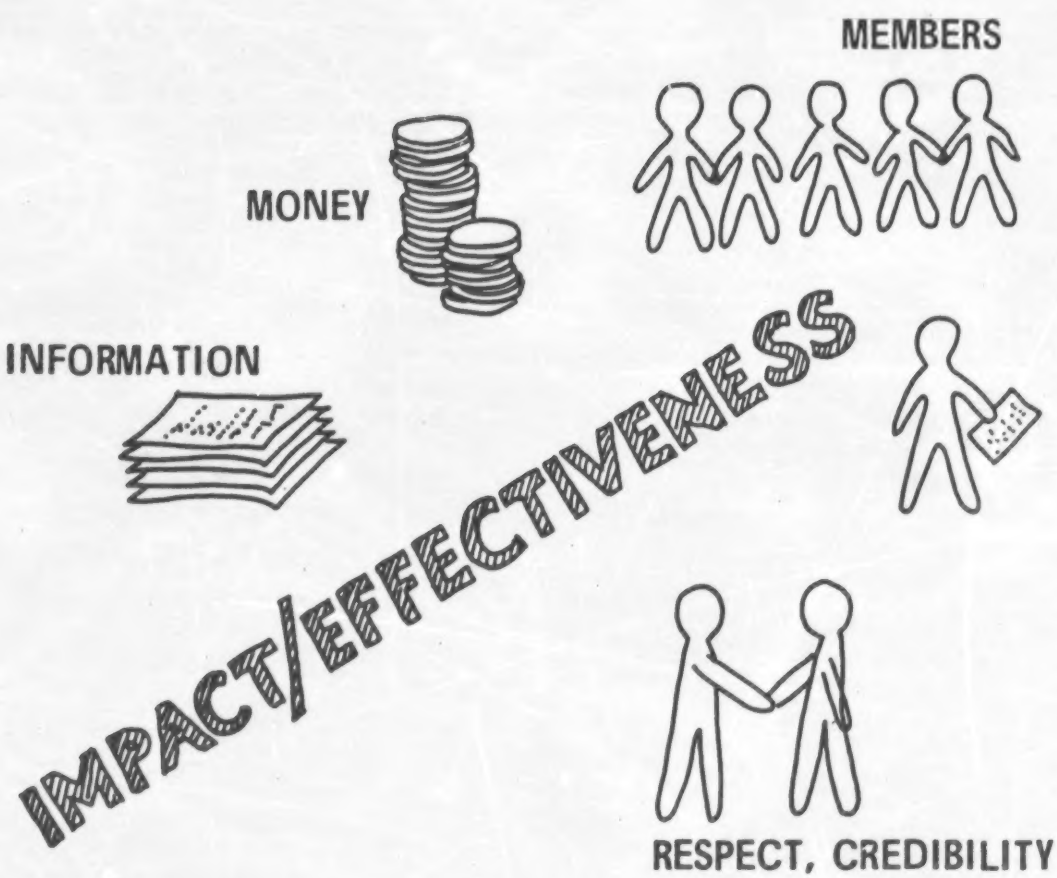
LEGISLATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF INTEREST GROUP EFFECTIVENESS

EFFECTIVENESS RATING	INTEREST GROUP	RESOURCES
1	Teachers' Organizations (NEA Affiliates)	Numbers, Money, Staff, Information, "Clout"
2	School Board Organizations	Staff, Credibility of Membership
3	Administrator Organizations	

Reference: State Policy Making for the Public Schools, 1976

BB 27

RESOURCES FOR LEGISLATIVE IMPACT



BB 28

COMMUNICATING WITH LEGISLATORS

- Be flexible
- Be on time
- Be prepared, clear about objectives
- Be brief, to the point
- Single spokesperson
- Be informal, friendly
- Acknowledge opposition
- Offer something of value
- Follow up in writing

BB 29

COALITIONS

Coalitions are temporary alliances among parties or factions to achieve a common purpose.

Coalitions require:

- Commitment of member resources
- Agreement to cooperate
- Suspension of competition, self-interest
- Shared leadership

BB 30

POLITICAL CLIMATE FOR EDUCATION

- Eroding political base – fewer than 30% voting adults have children in school
- Aging population – median age 31
- Centralization of decision making – state legislature, courts
- Decline in public confidence
- Declining enrollments
- Increasing competition for scarce public sector resources
- Education less appealing political issue

BB 31